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ABSTRACT

This collection of conference papers includes the following: (1) "Four Decades of Foreign Language Education: Are We Still at Cheese Station N?" (T. Bruce Fryer); (2) "Teaching French with the Internet: What the Students Want vs. What They Do" (Jean-Louis P. Dassier); (3) "Learning Behind the Screen: Computers, Conversations, Communities" (Laura Semones and Rebecca Chism); (4) "The ABC's of Total Physical Response Storytelling" (James C. Davidheiser); (5) "Understanding Hispanic Culture through Music: The Theme of Nostalgia" (Paula Heusinkveld); (6) "Enhancing the Study of International Business, Foreign Languages, and the Nonlanguage Aspects of Intercultural Communication" (Francis Achampong and Enrique G. Zapatero); and (7) "Formative Foreign Language Program Evaluation: Dare to Find Out How Good You Really Are" (Jean-Louis P. Dassier and William Powell). (SM)

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SOUTHERN CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

The Odyssey Continues

DIMENSION 2001

T. Bruce Fryer
Jean-Louis P. Dassier
Lara Semones
Rebecca Chism
James C. Davidheiser
Paula Heusinkveld
Francis Achampong
Enrique G. Zapatero
William Powell

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Editor
C. Maurice Cherry
Furman University

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Southern Conference on Language Teaching
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Review and Acceptance Procedures
SCOLT *Dimension*

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in this volume of proceedings of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) begin with the submission of a proposal to present a session at the SCOLT Annual Conference. Once the members of the Program Committee have accepted proposals, the editor invites each presenter to submit an article for consideration for publication in *Dimension*, the annual volume of conference proceedings.

Only those persons who present *in person* at the annual Joint Conference are eligible to have written versions of their presentations included in *Dimension*. Selected members of the Editorial Board first evaluate abstracts of the proposed articles. Those whose abstracts are accepted then receive copies of publication guidelines, which follow almost entirely the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. When the articles are received, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and other identifying information are removed from the manuscripts; and at least four members of the Editorial Board and the editor review them. Reviewers, who generally have some expertise in the areas treated by the articles they read, are asked to make one of four recommendations: (1) publish as is, (2) publish with minor revision, (3) publish with significant rewriting, or (4) do not publish.

Once these recommendations are reviewed by the editor, all authors are notified as to whether their articles will be printed. As a result of these procedures, at least three individuals decide whether to include an oral presentation in the annual conference, and at least five others read and approve each article that appears in *Dimension*.

INTRODUCTION

Some 700 teachers of second languages gathered for the joint conference of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) and the South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers' Association (SCFLTA), held March 8-10, in Myrtle Beach, SC. This year the SCOLT Board of Directors chose "2001: The Odyssey Continues" as our conference theme, perhaps because it was too easy to pass up, but more importantly, because the theme holds some meaning for L2 teachers who have spent time "in the trenches" for 2, 3, or more decades. When Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" was released in 1968, the pivotal year in the title seemed so distant, yet we have entered our new millennium with far less fanfare than most of us might have imagined. In much the same way that George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seemed immensely foreboding to those who read it in 1949, only to have the actual year 1984 be far less ominous than the author had prophesied, so too, when 2001 rolled around, it seemed in many ways disappointingly uneventful.

A great deal of change did take place, of course, between 1949 and 1984, as well as between 1968 and 2001, despite the fact that neither target year lived up to the hype surrounding it in the arena of popular culture. Whether one uses the environment, morality, the economy, political and societal institutions, educational philosophies, or language development as points of reference, transformation is inevitable. History shows that some alteration is usually good, yet many of the changes that surround us are not for the best, and some of these, though well intentioned, simply make us uncomfortable.

Members of our profession who began their language study before 1960 have "seen it all," in a sense, and will relate well to the opening article in this volume, Bruce Fryer's "Four Decades of Foreign Language Education: Are We Still at Cheese Station N?" Drawing not only upon our conference theme, but as well upon Spencer Johnson's recent best-seller, *Who Moved My Cheese?*, Fryer uses both Homer's *The Odyssey* and Johnson's popular book to construct a dual metaphor, chronicling his own journey through the often disparate methodologies, approaches, movements, and techniques second language teachers have witnessed over the past 4 decades. Without being cynical, Fryer looks critically at our collective journey and invites his readers to reflect upon both where we have been as a profession and where we are now. Perhaps his most important contribution, though, is to remind us that in our collective odyssey as professionals

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we have all too often latched on to what we have seen as a panacea, only to be reminded once again that no one has yet discovered the "quick fix" for language learning.

Years from now, when methods students are reading about trends that have characterized the teaching of second languages at certain periods, they will inevitably learn about the technological revolution that has put its stamp on the final decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the current millennium. In "Teaching French with the Internet," Jean-Louis P. Dassier deals with a question which makes many of us uncomfortable: To what extent must second language teachers integrate the use of the Internet into their teaching? Through an extensive analysis of a group of students at his university, Dassier became increasingly aware of the wide range of technical knowledge that his students brought with them, yet he learned as well that unfamiliarity with and resistance to technological innovations (i.e., "technophobia") can, under certain circumstances, have a very negative impact upon one's learning a second language, especially if specific technical knowledge is seen as a requirement for effective language learning. At the other extreme, Dassier found that under ideal conditions second language learners can become more proficient in their L2 and in the use of the computer if their teachers are skillful in integrating the two.

Technology also provides the context for "Learning Behind the Screen: Computers, Conversations, Communities," by Lara Semones and Rebecca Chism. The authors explore both the value and limitations of on-line discussions, describe their use under optimal conditions, and offer practical suggestions for setting up appropriate assignments and evaluating them. Of particular importance to those who have contemplated the possibility of involving their students in an on-line activity is the discussion of the task of the teacher, who while attempting to play the role of model facilitator, must walk the narrow line between being too detached or too involved.

Erroneously considered by some to have been relegated to L2 teaching in the lower grades, both Total Physical Response (TPR) and its outgrowth, Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS), have proven to be popular in a wide range of settings, from their use in ESL classes for students of all ages to programs directed towards college students and other adult learners. In "The ABC's of Total Physical Response Storytelling," James Davidheiser describes the genesis of his interest in TPRS and explains in detail how he has employed the methodology and materials for this technique in German classes at a prestigious liberal arts college. While making no secret of his enthusiasm for TPRS and the benefits it offers, he shares as well a few caveats for those who will be tempted to test this approach in their own classrooms.

What is unique about Paula Heusinkveld's "Understanding Hispanic Culture Through Music: The Theme of Nostalgia" is her decision to do more than provide yet one more general discussion of using music in the L2 classroom, with accompanying annotations, lists of ideas, and bibliography. She has chosen instead to approach her topic thematically and to focus on three songs which provide the appropriate basis for her discussion of "nostalgia." Her teaching strategies reflect well the mission of the professional *Standards* to which we now subscribe, in that they involve the integration of cultural exploration and exploitation of the linguistic skills students have acquired.

In "Enhancing the Study of International Business, Foreign Languages, and the Nonlanguage Aspects of Intercultural Communication," Francis Achampong and Enrique Zapatero explore the structure of a program which has worked effectively in the School of Business at their university. Not completely satisfied with the status quo of their existing international business curriculum, faculty members sought a means of revitalizing their course offerings. What they consider to be most distinctive about their revised program is the way in which business, language, and intercultural communication are woven together in the various components of their curriculum.

It seems appropriate that the final article in this volume should deal with "Formative Foreign Language Program Evaluation." The authors, Jean-Louis P. Dassier and William Powell, address specifically the issue of accountability, which has for the past 2 decades heavily dominated the agendas of educational bureaucracies, accrediting agencies, funding sources, university administrations, and state departments of education. By focusing on the kinds of problems that plague language departments at the post-secondary level, the authors undertook a thorough analysis of two groups of students at their university and, in doing so, learned not only a great deal about the native abilities, attitudes and stages of linguistic development of their own students, but as well about the usefulness of the evaluation process itself.

C. Maurice Cherry, Editor
Dimension 2001
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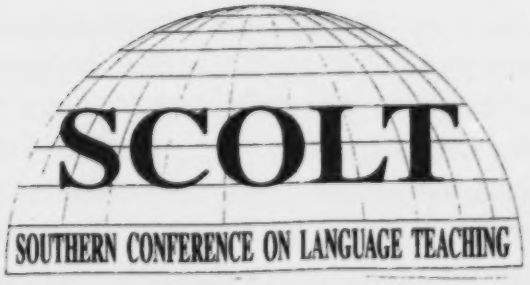
Acknowledgments

This volume of *Dimension* could not have been published without the collaboration of a large number of people. I am indebted to the 14 members of the Editorial Board, second language professionals who hail from 13 different states. Some have served on the Board before, and others are new. All accepted their assignments graciously, fulfilled their duties in an exemplary manner, and provided comments that were beneficial both to the authors and to the editor. Rarely did any reviewer check "publish as is" for a given manuscript, yet the four or more reviewers who read each of the articles included in this volume often felt that although a particular contribution needed significant reworking, it offered something of value to our particular audience.

Once more I must express my unbridled gratitude to Lee Bradley, who has proven yet again his dedication to our profession through his willingness to publish the present volume. We all continue to be indebted to Valdosta State University, which has provided to Lee the space and materials he needs to execute his responsibilities.

C. Maurice Cherry, Editor



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Four Decades of Foreign Language Education: Are We Still at Cheese Station N?

1

T. Bruce Fryer
University of South Carolina

A recent bestseller entitled *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson (1998), also co-author of *The One Minute Manager*, addresses the issues of one's ability to cope with change in professional work and in life in general. According to the story, two little people, Hem and Haw, use their brains to seek out their Cheese, but they become complacent and fail to notice that their Cheese is getting old and is disappearing. When the Cheese eventually does disappear, two little mice, Sniff and Scurry, run off to find new Cheese, in Cheese Station N, while Hew and Haw remain in the totally empty Cheese Station C and fail to adapt to their cheese-less environment. Reading this thought-provoking tale brought back memories to this author of a personal odyssey in foreign language education spanning 4 decades, from the early 1960s until the beginning of the 21st century.

During the idyllic early part of that odyssey, immediately following Sputnik and the NDEA Institutes which espoused the mythic hero of audiolingual methodology, many teachers, including the author, thought they had found what they wanted, a comfortable teacher-centered environment, or as Spencer might say, their "Cheese Station N." After all, almost no one could possibly remain in Cheese Station C, the comfortable environment of traditional methodology, based on grammar-translation techniques which had been developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to instruct Latin-grammar-school enrollees in classical Latin and Greek. Nonetheless, there are those who are still there in Cheese Station C, despite the hardness of the cheese.

Within our profession of language teaching there have been many different attempts to move us into new areas, or new versions of Cheese Station N's of language instruction. The following chart provides an overview of the different stages of foreign language methodology from the early 1960s, when grammar translation methodology was beginning to lose its respectability, until the present day. Those periods of language instruction present during the author's professional odyssey reflected the following methodological approaches:

Figure 1

20th-Century Approaches to Foreign Language Instruction

- Grammar-Translation Approach (*the original Cheese Station C*) This original approach was followed by a number of possible new productive approaches, each representing a new area of comfortable *Cheese Station N's.*
- Audiolingual Approach
- Direct Approach and Neo-Direct Approaches (Total Physical Response, Natural, Chilton)
- Cognitive-Code Approach
- Humanistic Approaches (Community Language Learning or Counselor Learning, Silent Way, Suggestopedia)
- Communicative and Proficiency-Based Approaches
- Standards-Driven Approaches (Content-Based & Service-Learning)

A 20th-Century Odyssey

This year's Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) was entitled, "The Odyssey Continues." *The Odyssey* (n.d., trans. 1944) of Homer, the tale of the 20-year personal saga of Odysseus to return to his homeland of Ithaca and his beloved Penelope, presents a series of difficult challenges and challengers that he and his followers were forced to experience. In a like manner this paper attempts to present an overview of the past 40 years in the area of foreign language education and a saga of some of the trials that our profession has encountered in that epoch. Like *The Odyssey* itself, the methodological journey is replete with tales of doubters among colleagues or of programs that have made very little movement away from either the original Cheese Station C or a newer Cheese Station N. Throughout this treatise the reader may be able to recognize some of the similarities between Homer's characters[1] and those skeptics about progress in foreign language instruction. Each reader will need to determine how much the profession has moved away from traditional tenets and, likewise, how much he/she has personally moved toward each or any of the new approaches to foreign language instruction mentioned below.

Cheese Station N's Newer Approaches

Grammar-Translation Approach to Audiolingualism

In the late 19th century and into the sixth decade of the 20th century, foreign language educators used the approaches employed for the instruction of the classical languages, Greek and Latin, as models for modern language instruction. These approaches represent our profession's own Cheese Station C (Kelly 1976). In the 1950s, foreign language teaching began sniffing and scurrying around to locate a new Cheese Station. Very few current foreign language programs reflect the original area of total comfort. The *audiolingual approach* offered a massive supply of new cheese for everyone to chew on for a while. And after all . . .

HAVING CHEESE MAKES YOU HAPPY. (Johnson, p. 30)

What does this now not-so-new Cheese Station N of audiolingual methodology look like in the foreign language curriculum and its classrooms?

> In the 1960's those preparing for a degree in modern foreign languages, romance languages, or Spanish, followed a fairly traditional curriculum. That curriculum in most four-year institutions consisted of beginning and intermediate language courses, a course in grammar, a course in conversation, a survey of Latin-American literature, a survey of Peninsular literature, and possibly some courses in specialized areas of literature. There were, of course, some programs which offered courses in Hispanic civilization or perhaps two courses in culture/civilization of Latin America and Spain. Usually the program of study consisted of 20, 24, or 30 credit hours, or perhaps more if the beginning and intermediate courses were not counted for the major. An analysis of many majors in Spanish or Romance Languages today indicates that the majority of the programs available to majors have not changed significantly. (Fryer)[2]

Much like the tenets set up for the instruction of language, be it beginning, intermediate, or advanced language, the curriculum is based upon the belief that "the primary purpose [is] to enable students to access and appreciate great literature, while helping them understand their native language better through extensive analysis of the grammar of the target language and translation" (Omaggio Hadley, 2000, p. 106).

Although some of the course titles may have changed, even Master of Arts in Teaching programs reflect the strong preoccupation with training teachers in our own image of the literary scholar. One need simply to look at the examinations required of graduates of these degree programs to see what is really going on in the courses. Recently, this author had the opportunity to review an undergraduate degree program leading toward certification for secondary school foreign language instruction that was being considered for accreditation by one of the southeastern states. Although there were courses in their catalog that reflected some movement away from Cheese Station N, very few of these were part of the curriculum required of their teacher candidates. The faculty in this university program tricked their students, much as Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, tricked her suitors from the court of Ithaca who were seeking her favor when it was thought that her husband Odysseus had perished on his travels abroad. The faculty, like Penelope, set up a great tambour frame on which they proceeded to create an enormous piece of needlework on which she worked all day long, only to pick apart the completed stitches by the light of torches at night while the others slept. She was able to fool the would-be aspirants by stretching out the time for her marriage to one of them and the completion of this pall, a testimony to her skill in needlework, to more than 3 years. The faculty of that university had hoped to get their program approved without really making any headway toward a new curriculum.

Likewise, audiolingual methodologists created a large framework on which to build the teaching of oral language, but somehow the quilt never fully reached completion. The fibers that held their methodology together were torn apart, and new, more adequate approaches had to be sought. Penelope's delay was not unlike postponing the inevitable need for change in the language curriculum for teachers, so as to better prepare them for the real demands and practical needs of students in secondary schools today.

Many methodologists and foreign language teachers in the late 1960s were like Hem, who refused to read the picture of the cheese and the following sign that Haw drew in trying to encourage him to leave Cheese Station N:

IF YOU DO NOT CHANGE,
YOU CAN BECOME EXTINCT. (Johnson, p. 46)

Audiolingual Approach

The psychological school of behaviorism and the emerging field of structural linguistics spawned the audiolingual approach to foreign language teaching in the period during and following World War II in the United

States. This highly developed and publicized methodology provided the theory used to train foreign language teachers for nearly 2 decades from the mid-1950s until the mid-1970s, although enthusiasm began to wane by 1970. Audiolingualism emphasized stimulus-response techniques founded on pattern practice leading toward a conditioned response; dialog memorization; and a natural sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the hands of inexperienced teachers, it locked students into a lower level of performance (novice). However, the unresearched bandwagon was so strong for the audiolingual approach as advocated through a series of popular textbooks, including those by Nelson Brooks (1964) and Robert Lado (1964), through the establishment of American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in 1967 by the Modern Language Association, and the availability of NDEA (National Defense Education Act) workshops, that it was difficult to change the momentum or direction. The circumstance was similar to that faced by Odysseus, who was intent on getting back to his homeland. Circe, daughter of the Sun and goddess of the wild, like the audiolingual methodologists, had warned Odysseus of the difficulty of passing the rocks of the two sirens–Scylla, the six-headed monster and man-eater, and Charybdis, a whirlpool which drew ships to their end. The foreign language profession did not realize how much it had lost by committing so completely to an audiolingual approach until it had come forth on the other side of the turmoil in the mid-1970s. Like Odysseus, who alone survived after losing every man on his ship, foreign language teaching emerged from the monsters of student reactions and the whirlpool of negative results from research projects (such as the famous Pennsylvania study directed by Smith [1970]), totally stunned and without direction.

Direct and Neo-Direct Approaches

In the earlier part of the 20th century, educators had advocated an active method that initially relied heavily on listening. Later on, speech associated with appropriate actions and movements was added. Specially constructed pictures illustrating life in the country of the target language were used to avoid translation so common in the grammar-translation approach. Pronunciation was important, but grammar rules were not overtly taught. Rather, an inductive approach was used, often gleaned through question-answer exchanges. The reading of texts involved direct understanding of the content, without the use of dictionaries or translations. These were launched to promote the oral-aural aspects of language as reactions to the grammar-translation approach, which emphasized reading and writing skills (Kelly, 1976). The *direct method* was reborn later in the 20th century in

approaches such as TPR (Total Physical Response) by James Asher (1982), and Tracy Terrell's (1977, 1982) *Natural Approach*, which reflected the well-publicized and often-quoted theories of Steve Krashen (1982). The Chilton Company published materials that were used in a number of high schools in the Southeast as late as the 1980s. Among them were the French text *Voix et images* and its Spanish counterpart. The training for use of these materials was highly controlled by the publisher, and the texts were used heavily in the public secondary schools with little modification. Often the methodology practiced employed the original direct method approaches, which were very difficult for students whose learning styles required visual contact with a printed text. Students watched filmstrips over and over and memorized the associated scripts dealing with Madame Thibaût and her associates. While the classes emphasized oral/aural language, the result was as extreme as the approaches in grammar-translation had been toward reading and writing. Although the neo-direct advocates had moved away from the original Cheese Station C, they had found their own new, comfortable niche and began devouring all the cheese in that place until it ran out. They resembled Homer's representation of the people that lived in isolation in the land of the Cyclops. They had no ships or anyone to make ships for them; so they stayed where they were on the top of the mountain and had no assemblies of the people. Teachers were lords and masters of their own areas and paid no attention to what was developing in other areas. There were instructors who were not aware of what was going on around them in other area schools, where other instructors had moved away from this Cheese Station N and were employing variations of the original model or some of the other approaches that follow in this paper. There was eventually no place for this to continue, given all the developments in methodology and technology; so the following saying from the wall decorations became true when applied to direct methodology or its new forms:

IF YOU DO NOT CHANGE, YOU BECOME EXTINCT.
(Johnson, p. 46)

Cognitive-Code Approaches

While Hem never left the traditional grammar-translation orientation of Cheese Station C, Haw did. When Haw moved out into new locations, he often wondered what had happened to old Hem and thought about going back to Hem to encourage him to come into the new maze. Haw wasn't totally certain that the audiolingual methodology was right for him. In the *Cognitive-Code Approach* (Chastain, 1976), he found some of the traditional elements that had made him comfortable originally, such as helping

students to gain a minimal control over the rules of the target language, thus giving them the opportunity to deal with new linguistic situations in a functional way. The students' current basis of knowledge, their cognitive structure, depended on their understanding of how the new language worked and also how their own language worked. Their *competence* was the foundation for their *performance*. Grammar was also explained in the cognitive-code language classroom. The audiolingual method had influenced the profession to begin to focus on oral language. Foreign language teachers working with the cognitive code approach looked back to what had been done originally and realized that there had been some mold on the grammar-translation cheese in Cheese Station C and that there had been less and less of it available. Like Haw, they now realized that the change should not have been surprising and that they should have seen it coming. Their suggestion to foreign language teachers who work so devotedly to maintain one particular approach in the classroom would be the following:

SMELL THE CHEESE OFTEN
SO YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS GETTING OLD. (Johnson, p. 52)

The cognitive-code approach, an ill wind that had taken the profession nearly all the way back to the original Cheese Station, resembled the plight of Odysseus and his men after they left the island of Aeolus, the keeper of the winds. Aeolus tried to be helpful and bottled up all the crosswinds which were keeping Odysseus from returning to Ithaca, the desired goal. Unfortunately for everyone, the men, not knowing the contents of the receptacle, started talking among themselves, thinking that there was gold in the vessel containing the winds. Being greedy, they decided to open it. It blew them back to where they had started from. It was now necessary for them to undergo another whole series of adventures before achieving their goal. Some of the new foreign language methodologies included affective approaches to teaching and learning.

Humanistic Approaches

In the 1970s, after the disillusion created by the failure of the audiolingual approaches to supply enough cheese to live on forever, teachers and methodologists began seeking out new areas which might be productive. They believed in the adage posted on the wall:

MOVEMENT IN A NEW DIRECTION HELPS
YOU FIND NEW CHEESE (Johnson, p. 54)

Amid the methodological confusion of the 1970s, it was felt that any type of movement in a new direction was helpful. Some feared going back to the cognitive-code approach, since it contained some of the cheese found in the original Cheese Station C. That breach, coupled with the post-'60s political climate, created an opportunity for a variety of *humanistic approaches* and strategies to become popularized (Moskowitz, 1978). Among these were *Counseling-Learning* (Curran, 1976), the *Silent Way* (Gattegno, 1976), and *Suggestopedia* (Lozanov, 1978). Many of Curran's ideas are derived from counseling theory and involve a teacher who is more passive than the traditional teacher and allows students to say the things that they want to say, thus reducing anxiety. In a series of steps, students move from a period where the teacher must intervene to a period where the students are free to interact with one another and the teacher(s), since the trust level has grown significantly among participants.

Gattegno's Silent Way involved listening and observing initially, and later emphasized that students work with their inner resources, including their experiences, their emotions, and their familiarity with the world. Using the Cuisenaire rods to teach structures, and color-coded word charts, the Silent Way approach failed to be widely used in classrooms in the United States during this theoretical decade of language teaching. Lozanov's Suggestopedia emphasized relaxation, longer class periods, and concentration techniques to assist in the retention of vocabulary and structures. Features such as soft lights, a classical music background, and plush chairs were not readily available nor generally practical in classroom environments, thereby limiting its influence.

All of these approaches laid the basework for the profession's concern for reducing the anxiety so often related to most of the other previous approaches, which were, for the most part, teacher-dominated and directed. They allowed both teacher and students to be able to follow one of the suggestions for dealing with change:

WHEN YOU MOVE BEYOND YOUR FEAR,
YOU FEEL FREE! (Johnson, p. 56)

Odysseus had an experience with Calypso, the beautiful and enchanting daughter of Atlas and an island nymph of Ogygia. Together they lived in a place with sweet-smelling cypress trees, with all kinds of great birds, a

vine loaded with grapes, with running water to irrigate the flowers–everything to make one relax and experience the sensations. Fortunately, Hermes, son of Zeus and messenger of the gods, came along and convinced Calypso to let Odysseus go free. The profession took the best of what the humanistic approaches had to offer and moved ahead on its journey.

Communicative and Proficiency Approaches

In the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the emphasis on teaching for communication (Savignon, 1983), based on the theories of Noam Chomsky (1965), dominated the foreign language arena. No longer was language perceived to be a process of mechanical learning based on repetition and teacher control. Many of the other approaches mentioned have had their basis in this theoretical mode. By the time that proficiency workshops and the application of the oral proficiency interview training in the 1980s became realities, teachers began to feel more comfortable having left behind the previous Cheese Station. They applied the principle for dealing with change, which says:

> WHEN YOU SEE THAT YOU CAN FIND AND ENJOY NEW CHEESE, YOU CHANGE COURSE. (Johnson, p. 66)

They began to allow students to practice in a variety of realistic, culturally appropriate contexts, to communicate with one another actively, to be creative in their practice, to use authentic materials, and to perform a variety of tasks while still attending in some degree to accuracy (pronunciation, grammar, culture). The 1980s were dedicated to applying proficiency principles (Omaggio, 1986) in the foreign language classroom, and the profession seemed obsessed with this approach, to the exclusion of other ideas. The concerns for dealing with other skills besides listening and speaking and for working toward the higher levels of proficiency demanded by professionals began to appear in abundance only later, in the last decade of the 20th century.

The profession, like the men of Odysseus, had been converted into something it was not. The smooth spell of the proficiency movement had so much influence that everyone was striving for *oral* proficiency, even though it was known that many in the group did not themselves operate at the higher levels of oral proficiency. Odysseus' men looked like swine, and Circe's spell had to be removed in order for them to have their original appearance. This happened when reading and writing, as well as accuracy in expression, slowly began to work their way back into the cognitive level

of the profession. Oral proficiency approaches had become our newest Cheese Station N and had lulled people back into complacency and comfort. Once again it was time to go back and reapply the principles for dealing with changes in students and in the community in general.

Standards-Driven Approaches (Content-Based and Service-Learning)

Proficiency in the 1980s and 1990s had focused so much on language development of the functions and the need for accuracy that the cultural context and content were often neglected in the process. From the mid-1990s on, the core of the *standards-driven approach* to language has been a concern for culture and other disciplines outside language instruction. The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996; Phillips & Terry, 1999) brought together the major professional foreign language associations (ACTFL, AATF, AATG, and AATSP). The 5 *C*'s of *Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities* widened the base of operations for foreign language educators (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese [AATSP], 2001). Another old adage of change applied once again:

IT IS SAFER TO SEARCH IN THE MAZE THAN
REMAIN IN A CHEESELESS SITUATION. (Johnson, p. 62)

Content-based instruction (Stryker & Leaver, 1997) had been the basis for immersion programs in elementary and middle schools earlier, but demands from the varying professions, particularly international business (Fryer & Guntermann, 1998; Loughrin-Sacco & Abrate, 1998; Cothran, 1994), forced college curricula to expand their focus beyond literature as the only content on which to base language instruction. Funded heavily from the federal level, programs for undergraduates and for teachers began to appear at the national level and abroad. Many teachers have taken advantage of these opportunities to expand their knowledge and abilities and to make *connections* with other academic disciplines. Many students began to double major or to minor in language with a concentration in another academic area of their preference, and the developments seem very promising.

On the other hand, in a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Schneider (2001) alludes to the plan of David Maxwell, former head of the National Center of Foreign Language Studies and currently President of Drake University, who proposes to eliminate the foreign language department at his university and send all language instruction abroad.

Maxwell believes that American classrooms are the worst places to master a foreign language. In the context of this article there will be no more "hemming and hawing" among his language faculty, since they will become extinct for ignoring the recommendations on how to avoid the flight of students and for failing to leave Cheese Station N. Maxwell's actions are either defensible or lamentable (Schneider, 2001) depending on your point of view,[3] but they certainly fit into the new standards movement, encouraging lifelong learning and fewer restrictions on the place or format for learning or acquiring foreign language skills.

In conjunction with the standard of *communities* standard, *service-learning* (Hellebrandt & Varona, 1999) provides individuals with opportunities to continue improving their language and cultural awareness through lifelong experiences. This has become a very significant element in the teaching of Spanish for use within our own borders in circumstances involving native speakers with social work, farm work, missions, legal needs, court interpreting, as well as cross-cultural communication in business contexts and bilingual education. Our heritage speakers (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, 2000) become extremely important in these contexts.

Approaches based on the standards movement now represent our newest Cheese Station N. There has not been enough time or development for us to believe that our Cheese may be running out or getting old. It behooves us, nonetheless, to keep in mind some of the warnings already mentioned which relate to the ultimate changes necessary. Let us not be like the cannibals or the Cyclops, who devoured the lifeblood of innovation and improvement in *The Odyssey*. All of us are striving for the Greek educational ideal of *arete*, or "excellence"; so try not to get too comfortable in your own Cheese Station N along the way!

Notes

[1] Throughout this article, references are made to characters and places in Homer's *Odyssey*, acknowledging the title of the 2001 SCOLT/SCFLTA (Southern Conference on Language Teaching/South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers Association) conference held in Myrtle Beach, SC, entitled "2001: The Odyssey Continues." A good reference for names and places mentioned in the article can be found in the earlier pages of Homer's *The Odyssey* (trans. by W. H. D. Rouse, 1937). If this text is not available to the reader, a number of excellent editions are available for revisiting the work, along with the fine video production made for television and readily available at Blockbuster Video, among others.

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[2] This publication will be available from San Diego State University, Center for International Business and Research (CIBER), 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA, 92182-7732, in the *Proceedings of the Conference on Language, Communication, and Global Management*, held March 28-31, 2001.

[3] To follow the lively discussion which resulted from President Maxwell's plans for foreign language, readers are directed to the web site archives for the colloquia of the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* which contains over 150 reactions to the position and both his original and follow-up responses to the responses: < http://chronicle.com/colloquy/2001/abroad/119.htm >.

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Teaching French with the Internet: What the Students Want vs. What They Do

2

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This project was undertaken to determine how students use the Internet for nonacademic purposes, how they use it for learning French, and what type of Internet activity they consider the most helpful to learn a foreign language (hereafter, FL). Survey questionnaires were administered on the first day of class to collect demographic data and to determine student familiarity with the Internet. During the course of the semester, students were given a choice of six Internet activities for each teaching unit. These assignments were then analyzed to find patterns of Internet use for learning French as a foreign language. Interviews and exiting survey questionnaires also helped evaluate the attitudes of students toward Internet use in their French class and at home. Findings suggest the importance of early and careful integration of technology into the general K-12 curriculum.

Background

The extraordinary growth of the Internet in the last few years has had a direct impact on FL instruction. FL educators have become increasingly familiar with this new technological means. Abrate (2000) explains, for instance, that 73% of AATF (American Association of Teachers of French) members use e-mail on a regular basis; 56% use the Web regularly; and two-thirds of them have Internet access both at home and at school. She reports that according to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly all schools have Internet access. This near ubiquity makes it clear that the relationship between Internet use and education is not one of *whether* it will happen, but rather *how* and *how well*.

The importance of the Internet is also reflected in the growth of its popularity. The Internet is now in fashion; it fascinates some instructors and learners. It allows contact with communities of FL learners (Gonglewski, 1999) and immediate contact with the target speech community, which may have an impact on integrative motivation.[1] Its interactive nature is the main indicator of the quality of a given educative software (Grandchamp-Tupala,

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Otman, & Pavel, 1996), and it is up-to-date (Beaudoin, 1998). Several FL specialists have also recognized that the Internet is perhaps the most useful tool to implement the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). Adair-Hauck et al. (1999) reported "the multimedia activities challenged students to take greater responsibility in working toward their goals for learning French" (p. 282), giving them the skills to become lifelong, independent learners (see also: Phillips, 1998; LeLoup & Ponterio, 1997). Finally, working with the Internet brings more flexibility to FL instruction. Adair-Hauck et al. (1999) also found that students involved in their experiment "reported that having the flexibility to individualize the use of the multimedia activities played an important role in their progress and development of certain language skills" (p. 282).

The central issue, nevertheless, remains that of determining whether technology, and specifically the Internet, is effective. Former Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley admonishes, "We are far enough along in the technological revolution and its application to learning that it is time for systematic review and analysis of what works best" (McNabb, Hawkes, & Rouk, 1999). According to McNabb et al., one needs to acknowledge that "just as important as learning what works, we must learn what does not work. We must not assume everything that employs technology is going to be successful." Following McNabb et al., one may conclude that successful integration of the Internet in the teaching of a foreign language results from a match between the pedagogical activities proposed by FL instructors and their appeal to FL students.

The Study

This project took place in a fourth-semester French course at a university in the United States and had the following objectives: (a) to survey student familiarity with the Internet and new technologies and (b) to analyze student preference for Internet activity formats.

A choice of six types of Internet assignments for each thematic unit was given to students. These assignments differed according to the following dimensions: selection of objective, level of instructional scaffolding,[2] medium, type of feedback requested by instructor, and type of Internet resource selected. Student patterns of Internet use were established. Were such patterns related to student familiarity with the Internet? To their proficiency in French? To other factors? In essence, the project attempted to respond to the following questions: Considering different Internet tasks proposed by FL specialists, which ones are more appealing to students?

Which tasks do they actually complete consistently? What are the factors influencing their choices?

The Assignments

Consistent types of assignment were given for each of the five units. Each academic unit proposed six Internet assignments, each corresponding to one of the groups defined below. Students needed to complete only one of the six to get full credit for a given academic unit. These assignment types were always related either to the functional objective of the unit or to its linguistic content. Five academic units were covered during the whole semester, giving students the choice of 30 possible assignments. The six types of Internet assignments were as follows:

Assignment 1: ***Dialogue/communication/e-mail*** allowed learners to communicate in French with native speakers or other learners of French. Students needed to submit to the instructor printouts of their e-mail exchanges or transcripts of on-line discussion/exchange (no less than a page).

Assignment 2: ***Guided exploration of French Internet site*** proposed a step-by-step exploration of authentic French/Francophone web sites related to the functional topic currently being studied.

Assignment 3: ***Student-selected research activity*** required students to explore the current cultural topic on their own and to write a short report. Students were required to research their topic using exclusively on-line reference tools. A list of 26 Internet reference tools was provided, and students were encouraged to explore and add to the original list.

Assignment 4: ***Francophone sites/language and its properties*** used web sites in Francophone countries to help learners practice grammatical features studied in context during the unit.

Assignment 5: ***Anglophone sites/French language and its properties*** proposed the same type of activity, but English-speaking associations, schools, and other groups hosted these web sites.

Assignment 6: ***Creative activity for experts*** encouraged students to create their own exploratory activity (cf. Assignment 2), which could be used by learners in the future.

Design of the Study

Survey questionnaires were administered on the first day of class. In addition to collecting biographical data, this instrument aimed at defining student familiarity with computers and the Internet. This first survey also helped determine students' self-assessment of their knowledge of and feel-

ings about the use of new technologies in education. The first objective was to define student familiarity with the Internet; the second was to characterize their feelings and attitudes towards the Internet and its use for foreign language instruction.

Internet assignments completed by the students constituted the second set of data. Descriptive statistics determined the most popular types of assignment. Patterns of Internet use for foreign language learning emerged. It was thus possible to compare student knowledge of the Internet and their personal use of the Internet to the selected type of assignment. Interviews addressing the question of attrition were conducted with students who dropped out of the experiment.

Exiting survey questionnaires were administered to evaluate students' assessment of the usefulness of Internet assignments, self-assessment of their Internet skills, and self-assessment of their language skills. These questionnaires allowed the researcher to measure changes in student knowledge and attitude toward the use of technology in the French curriculum (comparing pre- and post-experiment survey data).

Finally, discrepancies between what students predicted as preferences for Internet assignments and the assignments they actually completed were assessed.

The Population

Learners in two sections of a fourth-semester French course voluntarily took part in the study. They were free to leave before the end of the drop/add period and join without penalty a third section of the same course. The population amounted to 39 students on the first day of class. Their ages varied between 18 and 24, except for two older learners (in their 50s). Most of them were liberal arts (85%) and arts majors (13%). There were 9 male and 30 female students, a proportion that reflects a trend among liberal arts majors in the institution where the experiment took place. The vast majority of them (85%) had not studied any other language and identified the requirement that their colleges had imposed upon them as their main motivation for taking French. Despite a few exceptions, their motivation is best characterized as *instrumental*.[3] Of the 39 subjects, only 7 students continued their study of French beyond this course, a figure that is comparable to that of previous years.

They were collectively far from enthusiastic about computers: 77% of them owned one, but few of them were able to describe their computer's features and properties. The usual description was rather sketchy, following this pattern of responses:

"My computer is a 'Mac'/'PC.'"
"It is/is not equipped with a printer."
"It is/is not connected to the Internet."
"It is/is not equipped with a scanner."

Only one student gave a rather technical description of his computer: "300Khz PC, with CD-Rom, 7 Gigs Memory, 32 Ram, Modem 56 Kbps." Three students who owned a computer did not provide a description of their equipment and used the provided space in the survey to explain that they "had no clue." Moreover, half of the students said that computers were a necessity for school, but not necessarily an enjoyable necessity. Cost was the reason most often cited for not owning a computer (8 students), while a sizable number of students acknowledged that they would not own a computer if their parents had not bought one for them (15 students). In conclusion, the majority of these students were quite unfamiliar with computers. Here also, their motivation, if any, for working with a computer is mostly instrumental.

These students used the Internet to "surf," send e-mail messages, or use chatrooms (32%). Collectively, they spent less time on line than did similar groups in the rest of the country, because of a sizable minority of *technophobic* subjects within the group. As many as 16% of these students reported not connecting to the Internet at all. The majority of them (58%), nevertheless, said that they connect close to 11 hours per week, echoing the national average (cf. NUA Internet Surveys). For time spent on line, the group was thus quite heterogeneous, with a majority in the lower portion of the national average, and a hard core of individuals who refused to take part in the Internet revolution. Their lack of interest was confirmed by the fact that 87% of them confessed to never reading any computer/Internet magazines or articles.

At the beginning of the semester, the self-assessment of their Internet skills betrayed their overall insecurity. The impression was reinforced by their answers to the question: "How do new technologies make you feel?" Negative descriptors ("threatened," "confused," "don't like," "other negative feelings") received over 57% of the votes. Selected comments included the following: "Threatened; I do not have a computer or the Internet, and I feel left behind"; "I want to know more about using the computer, but since I only know the basics, I feel intimidated around people who know a lot more than me [sic]"; "[Computers are] OK but I don't like to be forced to use them"; or "Pretty nonchalant. If I need it, I can learn; if not, I don't really care." The scarce positive comments included these: "Very enthusiastic, only because I like to learn new things and technology is something

that is rapidly changing"; and "The wealth of information at my fingertips constantly amazes me. Plus, I get to listen to my hometown radio when I get homesick." Therefore, the majority of these students felt unprepared, threatened, and, in many cases, uninterested. As previously stated, educators envision the relationship between Internet use and FL instruction in terms of "How well . . . ?" These students still think that it is a matter of "Does it need to happen?"

The negative self-assessment of their Internet knowledge perhaps did not reflect their competence. A short pop quiz was administered with the pre-experiment survey, which was based on Ouillon (1998). In the first part, students answered 14 true-false questions about how the Internet could help them.[4] The majority of the subjects were aware of what the Internet could help them to achieve, as only 5 students were below the score of 57%. The most common errors concerned the largely unsuspected availability of recorded television programs on the web. Students were also asked to define terms related to the Internet and its use.[5] Most students defined correctly terms related to Internet use, such as "browser" (15 good definitions out of 39), "ISP" (25/39), "links" (27/39), and "search engine" (28/39). Technical terms, often related to web creation, were not as successfully defined: "URL" (10/39), "HTML"/"VRML" (7/39), "plug-ins" (4/39). It was not surprising that only one student in this group had created a web site. In conclusion, there were two computer enthusiasts (one man, one woman) who were motivated and knowledgeable about the Internet and a majority of students who were *not* motivated to become more knowledgeable about the Internet and felt quite insecure. Also, a significant minority did not own a computer and were among those (almost 25%) with negative feelings toward new technologies. Finally, a small minority (16%) appeared to have no motivation and extremely negative feelings toward the Internet and new technologies.

Results: Post-Experiment Survey and Internet Assignments

After a full semester completing Internet assignments, students completed a second survey questionnaire. As a direct consequence of the assignment, reports about weekly Internet use skyrocketed, with 77% of the learners connecting between 1 and 9 hours a week. Almost all the indicators seemed to demonstrate similar progress in attitude, knowledge, and motivation. The self-assessment questions revealed a much different profile: 72% of the students (vs. 50% before the experiment) now declared themselves experts, experienced, or competent Internet users. No student claimed to be an "Internet catastrophe" (vs. 3% at the beginning of the

semester). Their feelings about new technologies were less negative. The percentage of "intrigued" (from 23% to 29%) and "enthusiastic" (from 28% to 42%) grew steadily. This progress is due in a large proportion to the disappointingly high attrition rate (dropouts) that afflicted students with the most negative attitudes toward technology. Eleven students dropped their fourth-semester French class,[6] selecting either to switch to the third section of the course or to take the course during the following summer session. Of these 11, there were 3 male learners (one third of the male population) and 8 female students (over one quarter of the female population). No obvious gender effect can be assessed, but it can be said with more certainty that the dropouts included both of the older students, the students who did not own a computer, and those less able to describe their equipment (i.e., those less familiar with computers).

Of the remaining 28 students, almost 83% were positive about the Internet assignments; 40% said that they enjoyed Internet assignments in their French class; 28% said Internet activities were more enjoyable than workbook activities; and 15% said that Internet activities helped them more than other activities. Positive reactions included the following: "It showed me how to look for French documents on the Internet"; "It helped me improve my Internet skills"; "I like it, it makes French more applied"; "It helped me improve my proficiency in French"; and "They are more fun than regular assignments; so I don't mind them as much." Still, 17% remained negative; 10% said, "The Internet, yes! But not to learn French." Seven percent echoed: "The Internet, yes! But not for any academic course."

Negative reactions included these: "I am not sure whether it helped me"; "A lot of this stuff was way too complicated, though enjoyable. Speaking is the only way I could improve my skills, not looking at new words (I am a mainly auditory learner)"; and the plain and simple "Don't care!" The *technophobic* minority had undoubtedly shrunk, but unfortunately more by a process of deselection than by a conversion to a new technological credo. The students who came into the experiment without strong negative feelings were those who adopted more positive attitudes toward the use of the Internet for learning French.

Students appreciated the flexibility of the model, hence confirming the conclusions in Adair-Hauck et al. (1999). Positive comments collected in this study included these: "I liked the fact that [my instructor] gave us several assignments and let us choose which one we wanted to do. That way, we got to do the ones that interested us most"; "I like that [he] let us research something that interests us in French, like . . . the Internet assignment on food."

Subjects ranked their preferred FL Internet activities as follows:

1. Guided exploration of (authentic) French web sites
2. Activities designed for French students to help them learn French grammar
3. Activities designed for nonnative speakers to help them learn French
4. Access to on-line reference tools
5. Communication with native speakers of French (e-mail/IRC [Internet Relay Chat]/on-line pen pal)
6. Communication with other learners of French (e-mail/IRC)
7. Access to French radio (live/recorded programs)
8. Access to French TV programs
9. Access to French newspapers

Analysis of the tasks they actually completed, nevertheless, gives a different picture. Completed Internet tasks for the five units for all students can be summarized as follows:

1. Guided exploration of (authentic) French web sites (48 %)
2. Activities designed for nonnative speakers to help them learn French (42 %)
3. Activities designed for French students to help them learn French grammar (8%)
4. Research with French on-line reference tools (1%)
5. Communication with native speakers of French (e-mail) (1%)

Other types of activities were not selected even once during the semester by any of the survivors (communication with other learners of French/ chatrooms, access to French radio programs, access to French TV programs, and access to French newspapers).

Successful activities contained the following features or a combination of them. First, students wanted authentic materials and disliked the web site that accompanied their textbook, because it was perceived as being artificial:

> "Did not use the *X method*'s site; do not like the method, and wanted to go for the 'cultural' stuff (i.e., not like having your workbook on your computer)."
>
> "Liked the exploratory assignments/scenarios/simulations (going on-line to prepare a night out in Paris; preparing the menu for a French dinner)."

"I like to research for my own pleasure (get concert ticket, film schedule, etc.)."
"They were just more fun!"

These students, with little motivation to become fluent French speakers and with insecure feelings toward new technologies, demanded *scaffolding* (i.e., step-by-step activities, guided visits, etc.). The choice of a language (English vs. French) for the instructions and the scaffold did not seem to matter. The first three Assignments 2 were written in English and the last two in French. They were equally successful. Student comments on instructional scaffolding included "Step-by-step directions seemed reader-friendly (level of language and detail)." Student proficiency in French did not seem to make a significant difference in the choice of the Internet assignment. Both successful students and their less successful classmates were equally attracted by Assignments 2, the type of assignment with the highest level of instructional scaffolding.

A more serious limiting factor for all levels of proficiency (French and Internet) is the time demand. These students frankly expressed their concerns about time spent preparing for their French class.[7] They favored activities that were less demanding on their schedule and therefore exhibited a lack of enthusiasm for Assignments 1 (Communication). As one of them stated, "Chatrooms ... I don't have time." Without the scaffolding provided in Assignments 2, newspapers, radio, and TV programs were also perceived as extremely time demanding, since students would need more time and effort to make sense of the presented discourse. One student summarizes his classmates' feelings: "[We would need] Internet sites that are in intermediate French, not so overwhelming and intimidating French." Such reactions tend to concur with recommendations found in the foreign language *Standards* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). While authentic realia are appropriate for all levels of FL instruction, the tasks proposed to the students and based on the realia need to take into consideration student proficiency (see Gonglewski, 1999, p. 351). In the absence of a scaffolding or specified task, students automatically and unconsciously conclude that the task by default is a complete and thorough understanding of the text. This task is always beyond their proficiency, even beyond their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD),[8] which has the consequence of discouraging the learners. The only exceptions to this rule would involve those students displaying an impressive integrative or instrumental motivation to learn French and no negative feelings toward technology. While language instructors are sometimes blessed with such students, none of them took part in the experiment.

When students arrive in their French class with limited knowledge about basic computing, the systematic use of Internet assignments is often perceived as an insurmountable obstacle. An older learner, M., encapsulates this feeling quite efficiently in follow-up interviews, as well as in the first message sent to her instructor:

> It is necessary that I drop your class. I have finally concluded that it's really too challenging, unfortunately, for me to learn the computer and French at the same time.... This summer I WILL DEFINITELY LEARN the computer, maybe. But for now ... *Je le déteste*[9].... M
> P.S. I should also add a BIG thank you for motivating me to learn how to turn on the computer and how to E-Mail–these were giant steps!

While student M. did not see the irony in expressing her dislike of technology with a new technological tool, she wanted to make sure that her instructor understood that sending this message was already a major accomplishment. Learning French and using the Internet are understood as two divorced tasks, both raising a lot of anxieties. When the sum of these anxieties became intolerable, the student exerted her right to switch to another section, where traditional workbook exercises were substituted for the Internet assignments. Data collected for this study do not allow concluding whether attrition is due to *learner trait anxiety*, which is best understood as a general personality characteristic recurrent across several different situations,[10] or to *state anxiety*, which is an apprehension experienced at a precise moment in time.[11] The results of this study, nevertheless, establish unequivocally that adding an Internet component to a language class may create an affective reaction of *defensiveness*, defined by Allwright and Bailey (1991) as follows:

> By "receptivity" we mean a state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language, somebody else's language.... The opposite of receptivity would be "defensiveness," the state of mind of feeling threatened by the experience and therefore needing to set up defense against it. (p. 157)

As demonstrated in this study, defensiveness and receptivity are states that are not specific to language learning but also apply to the use of technology. Defensiveness seems to have been a common response for a

population with a modest background and/or low motivation for using the Internet inside and outside the classroom.

Discussion

Donaldson and Kötter (1999) remind us that language learning effectiveness is greatly impacted by positive emotions and attitudes and add that success in becoming a lifelong FL learner may be determined by the combined attitude/motivation factor. Most published research establishes unambiguous success when a technological component is added to an existing course, showing that it usually affects positively students' language learning experience. Gonglewski (1999) reflects such success in the following statement:

> Anecdotal evidence and surveys show that computer-mediated communication motivates students to explore electronic resources independent of class assignments, ... demonstrating that the Internet has already inspired students to continue the language learning process–consciously or not. (p. 360)

These observations are confirmed in Warschauer (1998), Donaldson and Kötter (1999), and many others. While the consistent conclusions of the previous studies can hardly be questioned, this survey establishes that, rather than being an enhancing agent, technology may be felt by the less technologically oriented students as yet another hurdle. The *technophobic* and technologically challenged learners were discouraged and refused to learn French with the Internet, as attested by the significant attrition during this experiment. These differences in technological skills have to be taken into account as curriculum planners implement further integration of technology into the foreign language curriculum. Adair-Hauck et al. (1999), for instance, relate a remarkably successful episode of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning); the report, nevertheless, describes students as being familiar with computers, owning computers, and being comfortable using computers. These learners are also described as knowing other languages. These marked differences in student motivation to learn languages and in student attitudes toward computers are the very reason why the previous results could not be replicated in the present study.

Both true successes and less successful experiences, nevertheless, point to the same conclusions. Any CALL episode imposes new and nontraditional roles for the teacher and the learner. While there is no doubt that using the Internet shifts the emphasis from teaching to student learning in a

manner consistent with the recommendations of the *Standards* (Gonglewski, 1999; Donaldson & Kötter, 1999; Adair-Hauck et al., 1999), it tends to precipitate a change of emphasis with which many teachers and learners are not yet comfortable. Abrate (2000) indicates that some French teachers reported not using the Internet because the "school doesn't believe in computers," or "the faculty is discouraged from using the Internet" (p. 12). These comments raise the question of whether such teachers can produce learners who are knowledgeable of Internet use for language learning and are able to use new technologies to take responsibility for their learning process. As exemplified by the insecure minority in the present study, using technology in order to exert more control over the selection of the content of their own learning is a disturbing concept for students who (a) come to college without having been encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, (b) come to college without having been exposed to learning technology, or (c) display negative self-assessments of their language and technological skills. These findings show that one cannot overemphasize the importance of the *Standards* for K-12 instruction. Weaving technology into the K-12 curriculum and giving students basic technological skills will enhance their chances for success at the postsecondary level, where technology will be used to teach and practice the target language. Beyond the postsecondary level, such skills will help individuals become lifelong FL learners.

The study also recalls the best lesson to be remembered about pedagogical use of the Internet and technology. A consensus is currently forming to respond to the injunction that "it is time for systematic review and analysis of what works best" (Riley, in McNabb et al., 1999). Technology cannot magically erase educational inequity and become the cure for all educational problems; it may actually exaggerate inequality, as is the case in the present case study with the *technophobic* learners or those unable to afford their own computers. Gonglewski (1999) states unambiguously that:

> No materials or media can magically lead us to accomplish goals. Indeed, [some researchers] warn against the seductiveness of integrating technology as a quick fix to more serious problems. In language programs, as in all fields, careful thought must go into curricular design, including consideration of proficiency aims, student motivation, and so forth. (p. 349)

She echoes Adair-Hauck et al. (1999), who state that "the profession now realizes that a computer is a medium for learning and not a method for L2 instruction" (p. 272). She also concurs with the first critical issue in

assessing the effectiveness of technology in education, according to The Secretary's Conference on Educational Technology (1999) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education:

> Critical issue 1: The effectiveness of technology is embedded in the effectiveness of other school improvement efforts. Linking technology with core instructional objectives is what makes good, effective use of technology. That's the message we need to communicate. It's a process, not a number. (McNabb et al., 1999 [on-line document])

The previous observation does not mean that technology use needs to be de-emphasized. As indicated earlier, the benefits far outweigh potential pitfalls. However, the message is clear that technology provides a new medium; it does not provide a guarantee for success. Too many times in the past, FL education has enthusiastically jumped on different–technological or methodological–bandwagons (Grittner, 1990), confident of having found the answer to all educational problems. While joyfully riding such bandwagons to the limits where they could lead, FL practitioners did not address more deep-rooted problems, such as issues in quality control of instruction and supervision of FL teachers, or outdated curricular frameworks. While many schools and districts are prompt to invest indiscriminately in new technological fads, how many of them invest time and effort in creating a curricular framework that is in harmony with the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, as well as with their respective state standards? The Internet is not a mere passing fad, but its use is not the pedagogical objective of foreign language instruction. It is merely one of the many available tools to reach proficiency in the target language.

Chapelle and Jamieson (1991) warn that the behavior and personality of students, the behavior and personality of teachers, the method of instruction, the variability of target language input, and students' reasons for studying another language have more effect on learning outcome than the medium (i.e., the computer). It is probable that these findings will remain true and consistent, no matter how much more sophisticated our technological means become. Technology, and more specifically the Internet, offers a vast domain where FL instruction can become more enjoyable, more efficient, and more appealing to a greater number of students. But it is not a panacea and will not live up to its potential unless it is carefully integrated into the K-12 curriculum. It is necessary to weave it into the general curriculum earlier rather than later. Then we may hope that new college students will not see technology as the additional hurdle that will make them fail

their FL requirement, but rather as a medium as natural as pencils and blackboards.

Conclusion

This project attempted to respond to the following questions: Considering different Internet tasks proposed by FL specialists, which ones are more appealing to students? Which tasks do they actually complete more consistently? What are the factors influencing their choices?

It was found that there was a gap between personal use of the Internet and use of the Internet for FL learning purposes. Factors explaining this gap were summarized as authenticity of the sources, level of scaffolding of the task, and time demands on the students. But a most dramatic demonstration revealed important potential gaps in student background knowledge, familiarity, motivation, and attitude toward new technologies and the Internet. When such discrepancies exist, weaving a technological component into the fabric of a course is often felt as compounding difficulties, by adding additional (and subjective) hurdles. These findings emphasize the importance of an early integration of technology across the curriculum.

Notes

1 Integrative motivation is defined as what drives the students to learn "a language to fit in with people who speak the language natively" (Shrum & Glisan, 2000).

2 "Instructional scaffolding is the support teachers provide that helps learners develop the skill. In providing support, the teacher metaphorically becomes a scaffold for the learner" (Kauchak & Eggen, 1998).

3 Instrumental motivation is defined as what drives the students to learn a language "to get a better job or to fulfill an academic requirement" (Shrum & Glisan, 2000).

4 Questions such as "On the Internet, is it possible to receive and send messages, consult newsgroups, download files (texts, software, etc.), acquire high quality musical files, listen to radios broadcasting from any location in the world, play video games, or gamble, etc.?"

5 The terms to be defined by students were: *ISP*, *browser*, *HTML*, *VRML*, *IRC*, *links*, *search engine*, *plug-ins*, and *URL*. Student-generated definitions were compared to Ouillon's and to those found on ZD Net: < http://www.zdnet.com/yil/content/surfschool/lingo/lingo_a.html >.

[6] The dropout rate is high for this instructor. Losing an average of five to six students per class is, nevertheless, *not* uncommon at the concerned institution.

[7] They have the same complaints in courses without an Internet component.

[8] *Zone of Proximal Development* is a term borrowed from Vygotsky. See Warschauer (1998).

[9] "I hate it."

[10] It is an individual's likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation. Persons with high trait anxiety have a tendency to perceive situations as threatening. This phenomenon has been proven to impair cognitive functioning, disrupt memory, and lead to avoidance behaviors (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991).

[11] If *trait anxiety* answers the question "Are you generally nervous?," then, similarly, *state anxiety* answers the question "Are you nervous now?" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991).

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Learning Behind the Screen: Computers, Conversations, Communities

3

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It has been several years since the availability of computers in classrooms has enabled teachers to profit from on-line discussions for students in various stages of language learning (elementary to advanced literature courses). Because of the popularity of the Internet and the growing access to computers, students are now able to relate to their peers in the virtual global community and extend the learning experience beyond the classroom. On-line discussion presents an opportunity to reconceive the notion of a forum for students to develop and communicate their ideas with other learners.

This article provides several recommendations to aid teachers who are considering integrating computer-mediated on-line discussions as a way to connect students in a community of learning. In addition, this article addresses instructors who are uncertain about how to use on-line discussions effectively in L2 classes and encourages those who have used them to reflect upon their pedagogical approach to computer-mediated communication.

Purpose and Value of Computer-Mediated Communication

Many educators view both asynchronous and synchronous discussions as an important part of either on-line courses, such as distance learning, or courses that meet in the traditional, face-to-face setting. These teachers recognize that through computer-mediated communication, students are able to interact with texts, peers, native speakers, authentic culture, and instructors more dynamically than ever before. As a consequence, computer-mediated forums offer an unprecedented medium in which "student interaction can take place in a text-based format, enabling both the interactional and reflective aspects [of speech and writing] to merge into a single medium" (Warschauer, 1997, p. 472).

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The potential of on-line discussion for the L2 classroom is further supported by studies suggesting that on-line discussions provide opportunities for meaningful interaction between and among learners, reduce anxiety levels, and increase student motivation (Beauvois, 1992; Olivia & Pollastrini, 1995). The findings of several studies point to greater student motivation, increased oral participation, and less anxiety during interaction on a synchronous network (Oliva & Pollastrini, 1995; Beauvois, 1997). Olivia and Pollastrini report findings of greater equality in the classroom, a movement from teacher-centered to student-centered learning activities, and improved learning skills with the use of computer-mediated communication.

Reporting results of one particular study, Beauvois (1997) notes that the computer-mediated environment fits a social constructivist view of language learning as a collaborative effort resulting in the construction of knowledge:

> Vygotsky's (1978) image of "scaffolding," the creation of support systems among learners to facilitate language learning, applies very well to this process. Students, usually with the aid of an instructor, build such support structures for one another as they exchange ideas, answer each other's questions, and negotiate for meaning in their study of texts. (p. 109)

Beauvois contends that peer interaction across a computer network, rather than isolating users, connects them through meaningful interaction and discussion. In addition, the inherent anonymity of this type of interaction is inclusive in nature instead of exclusive, allowing those students who are often marginalized in the classroom for reasons of race, gender, personality type, or learning style to participate equally. It is suggested, therefore, that when interacting in on-line discussions, students often view themselves as members of a community who share a common goal and language. It should be noted that in many of the studies the researchers suggest that without the teacher's intentional guidance, on-line discussions can oppose a pedagogy that is meant to connect and empower our students. On-line discussions, therefore, warrant structure and guidance to fully enhance the L2 learning process and to underscore the standards of L2 language learning.

L1 or L2?

The growing interest in computer-mediated communication has prompted more research documenting the purpose and value of on-line discussions. The volume of research has increased rapidly as L2 teachers have

acquired and incorporated various computer applications (Bush & Terry, 1997). This research includes studies examining the exchange of ideas among L2 learners in on-line discussions as well as presenting ideas for collaborative projects involving computer-mediated communication (Beauvois, 1992; Kelm, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Chávez, 1997; Warschauer, 1996, 1997). Yet professionals are still considering one obvious question concerning computer-mediated communication in the L2 class: Which language (L1 or L2) is acceptable for on-line discussions?

In many of the aforementioned studies, the researchers posit that the use of the target language in on-line discussion is a beneficial component to L2 teaching. In most studies addressing the issues of on-line discussion, the majority of subjects communicated in L2. In these instances, the ultimate goal of computer-mediated communication was used to promote L2 language production and L2 oral communication in the classroom. The focus of many studies involving computer-mediated communication is to examine L2 learning, and few report that the use of L1 in on-line discussions impedes the L2 learning process. However, when interacting with their peers, students are likely to use L1 in informal discussions for purposes of comprehension and communication of ideas (Scott & Semones, 2000). This use of L1 allows students to discuss ideas using a more familiar (and often more academic) register. During on-line discussions, students at all levels of L2 study may use a combination of L1 and L2 to negotiate and create meaning. This bilingual approach may be advantageous, because it relieves the substantial cognitive demands involved in L2 learning. Of course, the teacher is not obliged to use L1 when participating in the on-line discussions, but students should not be penalized for discussing, debating, and sharing knowledge in L1.

Designing the Computer-Mediated Discussion: A Teacher's Role

If on-line discussions are to be an important component of an on-line course or part of a class that meets regularly in a classroom setting, L2 teachers should establish the educational purposes of on-line discussions, which should be designed with clear objectives in mind and facilitated through monitoring and evaluation. Instructors must therefore think critically about the approach to connecting and networking students together in the L2 classroom and realize that it is not simply because the technology represents an innovative approach that the on-line discussions are pedagogically sound. Simply requiring students to interact on line does not mean that they will automatically acquire new knowledge and understanding of the language. Thus, without careful attention to the construction of on-line

discussions, computer-mediated conferences may simply reinforce conventional ways of L2 teaching and learning rather than encourage students to interact through meaningful discussion. However, there are several ways of structuring on-line discussions to promote communication and cooperation that may ultimately improve the quality of the L2 learning experience.

Teaching students to become accustomed to a group and to grow comfortable with their community of peers is an important step in enhancing on-line discussions. Therefore, instructors should emphasize two important values to L2 learners: (1) a sense of community that values communication and the views of others and (2) a belief that their own interpretations, personal knowledge, experience, and expertise make a significant contribution to their learning. These values encourage important processes, such as discussing, debating, reflecting, and reviewing, which can ultimately lead to deeper cognitive processing of the language (Knowlton et al., 2000). The following guidelines are for teachers who are interested in designing and implementing successful on-line discussions in their L2 courses:

1. Establish the value of on-line discussions.
2. Establish clear objectives and expectations.
3. Model and monitor different types of questions and interactions.
4. Explain evaluative criteria.

Establish the Value of On-line Discussions:

An essential part of creating successful on-line discussions is introducing the concept of community to students. Building a community within the classroom requires establishing an environment that reflects mutual respect and a right to privacy. To ensure anonymity and privacy, on-line discussions should be held on a local area network (LAN) as opposed to the multiple Internet chat rooms available to users. The advantage of using LANs is that students need a user name and password to activate the system, and access to the discussions is limited to the class participants. Only in cases where the class ventures to exchange with other members of the target culture, thereby expanding the community outside the classroom, or in cases of distance learning should instructors consider using Internet on-line discussions.

Establish Clear Objectives and Expectations:

In order to design successful computer-mediated discussions, it is necessary to establish clear objectives and expectations for participation. Educators may assume that the criteria and standards for participation are

self-evident, but if these objectives are not clearly articulated, students have no choice but to revert to their own past experiences to help them define acceptable levels of performance. One way to alleviate this problem is to delineate exactly what is expected from students as they participate in on-line discussions.

In explaining the potential of on-line discussion to students, instructors should emphasize that the value of a computer-mediated forum lies in the interaction among students. It is necessary for the facilitator of the course to encourage the full participation of each student during on-line discussions. Thus, the L2 instructor must consider viable strategies for creating an interactive community of learners. For example, what are the requirements for participation in the on-line discussions? Does the student who simply posts responses but neglects to initiate discussion from peers demonstrate acceptable participation? These are questions that only the L2 instructor can answer and should establish before requiring students to interact on line. Of course, while some students may be quite interested and will vigorously participate in on-line discussions, many will inherently view their participation as an attempt to fulfill an assignment. By requiring participation in on-line discussion, the instructor obligates students to interact and share their ideas while reducing the pressure on them to interact for a grade.[1]

In addition to promoting participation, the type of task used to encourage student participation is an important aspect of the on-line discussion.[2] The task creates the need and purpose for on-line discussions and sets the stage for all other criteria. In creating the task, instructors must think about what kind of product is desired from the students. For example, students may work together to create a web-page, a story, a composition, a portfolio, a brochure, or a résumé. Alternatively, on-line discussions may require students to exchange ideas about a cultural topic, share information about a topic based on an L2 literary text, or respond to comprehension questions based on a previous class discussion. On-line discussions may also help students develop and produce a final, collaborative project that is the result of the contributions of multiple members of the L2 class. This cumulative project may include creating a web-site, a collection of student-authored poems, or a series of commentary pertaining to a political or social issue. Students and instructors from other disciplines should have the opportunity to view collaborative projects on line. Exhibiting students' final work can be a rewarding experience for L2 learners, as it advocates an appreciation for a shared knowledge base for the class and a sense of ownership of ideas. In addition, students have the rare opportunity to compare their own knowledge and expertise to that of their peers.

Model and Monitor Types of Questions and Types of Interactions:

An essential step in teaching the value of the classroom-as-community is demonstrating how to become a part of an educational network of learners. Yet, promoting student-generated on-line discussions can be problematic for many reasons. One significant drawback to this type of discussion is that many students are not accustomed to asserting their ideas and challenging themselves and others in either debate or Socratic questioning. In fact, students are often so well indoctrinated into a teacher-as-stimulus/student-gives-response model of thinking that they must be retrained to see that they, too, have a responsibility to make meaningful contributions to a discussion. For this reason students must be taught how to effectively participate in the on-line environment.

As an introduction to using on-line discussion in class, it is important for the instructor to design a preliminary task that will encourage optimal interaction among the students. The task should support participation and elicit substantive remarks from students. Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993) recommend tasks such as "jigsaw" or "information gap" to maximize interaction among L2 learners. In the jigsaw task, students hold portions of a totality of information that must be exchanged in order for them to attain a common goal. Tasks such as information gap are those in which one student holds information that the other does not already know but needs to know in order to complete a task (pp.15-17). These types of tasks help students define their role in the classroom community and better understand the goals and expectations of the on-line activity. The teacher's function in the task is to synthesize the students' comments and help them better understand the salient points of a discussion.

When students understand how various students represent different or similar perspectives, they begin to recognize the value of discussion and exchanging ideas. As a result, they are more willing to offer additional comments that are valuable contributions to the issues addressed in the L2 class. As part of an on-line discussion, the instructor might ask a student to provide textual examples to support an assertion, compare an abstract concept to another, narrate a story from a different point of view, or simply rephrase a sentence in the form of a question. Once students are interacting in an appropriate manner, the instructor can elicit responses to substantial questions. One way the L2 instructor can encourage student response is to model the types of questions and responses that are appropriate for on-line discussions. To illustrate an example, the instructor may respond to a student's remark by suggesting that all of the students examine a situation from another perspective: "Student X makes a good point, but would the

narrator of the story agree?" Alternatively, the instructor may encourage the on-line participants to consult one another for information. In this instance, the instructor must decide on the accepted length and the reasonable deadline for posting responses: "Students X, Y, and Z, can you find anecdotal evidence to support these claims among your peers? Consult three members of the class and post your findings within 5 days."

In addition to setting attainable goals for the on-line participants, the instructor should carefully craft questions that promote interaction and provide students the opportunity to expand and elaborate on their responses. For example, consider the question: "Est-ce que vous avez déjà eu cette experience?" (Have you had a similar experience?) The logical response might be "oui." Without the necessary parameters for discussion, it should not be assumed that students are capable of distinguishing between the short answer, "oui," which is true and answers the question, and a more acceptable response providing more essential information. A more appropriate question might ask students to think of and describe a similar experience and compare it to that of a peer. The instructor must provide guided instruction to all types of acceptable responses to questions, as well as questions that are suitable given the context.

When teachers participate in on-line discussion, they model appropriate participation and train students to articulate their ideas in the L2/FL. However, as students become more accustomed to the nature of on-line collaboration, the teacher should make fewer contributions to the discussions. Early in the course, the instructor should be involved in the on-line discussions, coaching and contributing ideas. By the second or third assignment, however, the teacher's role should evolve from that of participant to that of facilitator. Eventually, instructors should give students free rein over an on-line discussion. This freedom does not mean, however, that students will not require further assistance with understanding their own responsibilities as active participants in a discussion. In fact, teachers remain responsible for guiding and facilitating students' interactions with one another through the duration of the L2 course.

A final strategy that is useful for maintaining the quality of on-line discussion is questioning. Fostering on-line discussions through Socratic questioning might help demonstrate to students how they can elaborate and clarify their ideas. By inserting some well-crafted questions at key points during the discussion, instructors can encourage a deeper level of analysis.[3]

The most important aspect of constituting the on-line discussion as an integral part of the L2 course is to establish a community based on the value of respecting each student's contribution and privacy. Without this

sacred understanding, on-line discussions lose their pedagogical focus and educational value. Comments that are derogatory or inflammatory should never be tolerated, and comments not directly pertaining to the subject matter and task should be strongly discouraged.

Explain Evaluative Criteria:

In order to encourage participation among students, L2 teachers should emphasize the importance of on-line discussions by appropriately weighting their value. As previously mentioned, a student's willingness to actively engage in discussion is usually directly related to the percentage of the overall grade that the discussion is worth. If the discussion is to be taken seriously, and students are aware that collaboration can help distribute knowledge among a student community, the discussion should be worth a substantive portion of the course grade.

Here are several suggestions for incorporating the on-line discussions into the course grade: First, the instructor must decide on the minimal acceptable number of postings and responses students are expected to produce during each on-line discussion. Next, students should be made aware of the topic of discussion several days prior to the on-line interaction. In addition, they should know who will initiate the discussion, who should interact with whom (i.e. student-student, or teacher-students), how many participants are involved, as well as how the discussion will be evaluated. Finally, questions such as when and where the discussions will take place (i.e. asynchronously or synchronously) should also be clearly outlined in the task.

Evaluation of on-line discussion is another important aspect of integrating successful computer-mediated activities into the L2 classroom. However, evaluation of on-line discussion can be difficult and even problematic. For example, because teachers insist that students freely generate topics and elaborate on them, it may seem rather disingenuous for instructors to monopolize the evaluation process. While there is the understanding that instructors must evaluate student contributions, it is also argued that additional assessments, such as self-evaluations and evaluations of a final, collaborative project, should be incorporated into the on-line discussion process.

There are several approaches to encouraging the participation of all students in computer-mediated discussions. First, students must be aware that they are responsible for these discussions, both in participation and content of discussions. The teacher's role, on the other hand, is to enrich

the learning experience and ensure productive, constructive, and meaningful discussion. Promoting this type of environment requires the instructor to provide feedback, monitor and manage the content of on-line discussion, and model appropriate remarks. Only then is it apparent to students that the role of the instructor is that of facilitator and not that of the final authority. In addition, teachers should regularly participate in on-line discussions in order to respond to students' thoughts and questions or to simply synthesize their comments. Instructors may also decide to note unsuitable portions of a discussion that are unrelated to the task, and they should provide practical suggestions about improvement and students' progress in both their participation and their ideas.

In order to sustain structure of the on-line discussions, the "feedback should be immediate, continuous, and unambiguous" (Hansen et al., 1999, p. 190). Immediate and frequent interaction on a weekly or case-by-case basis is the best way to encourage students and promote effective on-line discussions. Feedback can take the form of consulting, organizing, or managing an ongoing project, suggesting modifications of a composition, or synthesizing and redirecting comments during an on-line discussion. However, teachers should avoid correcting every student response, interfering with or dictating the task, and making endless corrections.

The following guidelines should be considered for evaluation by those using computer-mediated discussions in the L2 classroom:

(1) ***Participation:*** Decide on the minimal acceptable number of postings and responses to produce per on-line discussion or per week. Establish who will initiate the discussion, how many students will participate, when, and for how long. Students should be made aware of the topic of discussion prior to the on-line activity. Teachers should decide whether each student will simply post an original contribution or whether more detailed replies are required.

(2) ***Deadlines:*** Students must participate in and make a contribution to the discussion within a specified amount of time. Observing deadlines will encourage students to be accountable for their own learning.

(3) ***Risk-Taking:*** Students must employ all types of questions and interactions that have been previously demonstrated by the instructor. In this way students demonstrate initiative, experiment with the language, and monitor their own progress.

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(4) ***Pre- and Post-Assessments:*** Pre- and post-assessments allow instructors to assess the nature of on-line discussions. For example, the teacher may evaluate how students constructed and understood the instructions or whether the students followed the directions and completed the assignment. The teacher may further evaluate whether the students made a significant contribution to the discussion. The assessments may also take the form of formative and summative evaluation of L2 course material.

(5) ***Product:*** Though the instructor's evaluation is ultimately necessary in determining a final grade, feedback on all aspects of on-line discussions should be frequent and continuous. Because students often view summative evaluation as punitive, continuous self-evaluation from both classmates and professors can create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

(6) ***Peer Evaluation:*** In order to keep students connected and engaged in the on-line community, students must learn from one another and appreciate the benefits of acquiring knowledge through sharing and comparing ideas. It should be noted, however, that asking students to evaluate one another may foster competition, increase anxiety, or undermine future interactions. Thus, requiring students to evaluate their peers may not be the best way to promote the on-line community.

Teachers should remember that informally the interaction of the discussion is itself a form of continuous peer evaluation. When students engage in discussions, they are receiving feedback on the quality of their ideas. If peer evaluation must take place, it should be more formal; that is, students may nominate two or three classmates who have made meaningful contributions to a discussion to lead the next discussion or elect them to present their work in the next day's class.

(7) ***Self-evaluation:*** Self-evaluation provides students with an opportunity to critically reexamine their own contributions to course discussions. Asking students to self-evaluate creates an environment where students become accustomed to thinking critically about their own thinking and learning. Self-evaluation is successful only if students understand the criteria and practice applying them to their work. To ensure that students understand the evaluation criteria, they should receive the criteria in writing. Instructors should

consider that many students are as reluctant to self-analysis as they are to peer evaluation. In order to encourage students to reflect on their performance and monitor their own progress, teachers should supply students with a checklist of activities or provide questionnaires outlining specific aspects to be evaluated. Additionally, students may be guided to consult retrospectively the transcripts of previous on-line discussions and evaluate their participation and the nature of their comments.

Summary and Conclusion

While the possibilities of computer-mediated activities cannot be completely outlined in the scope of this article, several important aspects are mentioned and should be considered by those using on-line discussions in the L2 classroom. First, on-line discussions must be constructed to meet educational objectives and should not be implemented simply because an institution has advanced technological capability. Second, educational professionals must remember that when on-line discussions are used judiciously, there is a need for careful consideration of the guidelines and logistics for the discussions. Third, instructors must model, monitor, and evaluate these discussions in order to facilitate the discussions in a way that allows students maximum freedom to explore the language through collaboration with classmates. Finally, it should be noted that evaluation of on-line discussions is necessarily a continuous process that involves self-analysis and peer input. When these guidelines are considered, on-line discussions can encourage students to value the contributions of their peers, to take responsibility for their learning, and to expand their L2 knowledge to foster networked communities of communication.

Notes

[1] According to Oxford (1997), there are important distinctions among three strands of communication in the FL/L2 classroom. These strands, which should be considered by those creating on-line activities for learners, may be briefly summarized as follows:

> *Interactive*: refers to personal communication which is facilitated by an understanding of (a) language tasks, (b) willingness to communicate, (c) style differences, and (d) group dynamic.
>
> *Collaborative*: refers to a more social constructivist base which views learning as construction of knowledge within a social context and which therefore encourages acculturation of individuals into a learning community.
>
> *Cooperative*: refers to a particular set of classroom techniques that foster learner-interdependence as a route to cognitive and social development.

[2] See Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993) for a detailed description of tasks that elicit cooperation, collaboration, and interaction among L2 learners.

[3] See Bloom's (1956) taxonomy for categorizing levels of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. The taxonomy provides a useful structure in which to categorize questions from many levels of abstraction and provides strategies for applying the questions.

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The ABC's of Total Physical Response Storytelling

4

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What is Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) and how does it work? More and more teachers are asking this question on listserves and at second language (L2) conferences. The purpose of this article is twofold: to answer these two questions and to share its success as a second language teaching method in general, and in my classes in particular. A brief discussion of the origin of TPRS will lead to a better understanding of it.

History of TPRS and Research Background

TPRS grew out of the second language teaching method called Total Physical Response (TPR). In the 1960s, James Asher, Professor of Psychology at San Jose State University, began publishing the results of his studies on second language learning. He observed that children learn language by following commands before they ever begin to speak. Once they are ready, they start speaking naturally and have by that time built up a formidable vocabulary bank. According to Asher, they are able to make great progress simply carrying out the instructions of their parents first, and later, many others. Though they might make errors, large amounts of input or modeling will lead them to correct usage (Asher, 1972, p. 133). Asher created a new method of second language instruction out of his theories, calling it Total Physical Response, or Learning by Commands. The method was so revolutionary, yet so simple, that in the decades following Asher's work, TPR, as the method came to be called, received more and more research attention and classroom application.

As early as 1965 Asher published results of experiments in learning Japanese and Russian. A volunteer group of 36 college students with no prior training in Russian was divided into an experimental group and a control group. "During the retention tests, each student in the experimental group performed individually with physical action while control students listened as a group to the Russian input and wrote their responses" (Asher, 1965, p. 294). Results showed that although immediate recall did not differ

markedly, there was substantial improvement in retention by the experimental group for short, long, and novel utterances 2 weeks after the training. Asher believed his studies justified the use of physical action in language learning. He also speculated why adults may be slower to learn:

> Still another possibility is that children unintentionally use the technique total physical response while their parents do not. For example, much of children's play has to do with language synchronized with physical action (i.e., "Come on, Jeff, let's ride our bikes!"). Adults, by contrast, tend to be physically stationary and inert when they use language (i.e. "What do you hear from Edward?"). (Asher, 1965, p. 299)

Later findings by Asher indicated, however, that adults can learn a second language as well as or even better than children if they are prompted to learn by physical actions:

> Clearly, there was an inverse relationship between age and comprehension when the instruction was directed to the right hemisphere. Contrary to the common belief in the younger child's "natural" advantage in language learning, our data suggested that when the context of language learning for both children and adults was designed for assimilation by the right hemisphere, children lagged behind adults in understanding spoken Russian. (Asher, 1981, p. 204)

Consequently, more and more initial language learning came to be labeled a right-brain function. Asher garnered powerful support for his L2 theories from Stephen Krashen's parallel research conclusions that L2 learning can come only from comprehensible input and that comprehension precedes production. Winitz and Reeds (1973) phrase this idea a little differently by saying that memory theory indicates that retrieval of items requires more training than recognition of items. To Krashen (1978), speaking is useful in language acquisition, not as a means for L2 learners but as their source of "*intake*, the input language that acquirers can actually utilize for language acquisition" (p. 15). He insists, furthermore, that too early speaking results in the use of the surface structure of the first language. Krashen's numerous writings and public appearances gradually helped bring this home to many people interested in L2 acquisition. He also taught that traditional ways of second language learning raise one's affective filter, a fear of making mistakes, which prevents students from learning.

Others were coming to similar research results. Harris Winitz, Tracy Terrell, and Valerian Postovsky were developing what they referred to as *natural* methods of language learning, which stressed comprehensible input, gradual reproduction, and stress-free learning. Alice Omaggio Hadley (2001) sees a clear evolution from what she calls the "direct method" of Asher to the natural methods of Winitz, Terrell, and Postovsky (p. 118).

In his desire to see a change in the methodology of second language teaching, Postovsky, for example, clearly came down on the side of aural comprehension as preeminent in the early stages of successful L2 learning. He asserted that premature oral practice led to short-term memory overload, and his experiments at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, led to corroboration of the theory that high retention rates are achieved by an aural comprehension approach:

> On the basis of this and previous studies we have reasons to believe that the two skills–speech comprehension and speech production–although obviously reciprocally correlated, are not necessarily mutually reinforcing in the initial phases of instruction. This appears to be so because training in oral production requires development of total and automatic control of both lexical and structural elements presented in the program. The student's attention, therefore, is necessarily focused more on the structural details and less on the contextual meaning of the message. In comprehension training the total control of linguistic data is neither implied nor necessary. . . . Consequently, the student's attentional focus is shifted from preoccupation with structural details to decoding of contextual meaning. (Postovsky, 1981, pp. 181-182)

Learning Another Language Through Actions was the actual title of Asher's groundbreaking book in 1977[1] (Asher, 2000). In its first edition, Asher lamented the erosion of students from L2 classes before achieving basic proficiency, because of the exclusion of kinesthetic approaches to language learning, and developed his system of learning by actions and commands to involve the whole person. He thus sought to counter the widely held belief that languages are unlearnable (Asher, 2000, p. x). Asher presents 53 actual TPR class units to enable the teacher to ease the student into stress-free comprehension. He begins with "Stand up," "Sit down," "Walk," "Turn," "Stop," and "Jump" and accelerates to "Point to the door," "Point to the chair," "Point to the table," "Walk to the door," and so forth, until one has at least 12 lexical items per class which are varied and recycled again and again so that there is no confusion. In the 53rd class, students are

working in pairs, with one student reading a passage on how to drive a car and his or her partner acting it out.

Below I describe and illustrate my own and my students' experiences with Total Physical Response, which depart to some degree from the Asher approach, and with Storytelling, which was devised in the 1980s and 1990s to supplement TPR. Those wishing to stick to a classic TPR approach are referred to the Asher book. Asher has also developed a series of student kits, such as "The Farm" and "Fun in the Snow," for easy vocabulary acquisition. To aid teachers in composing commands, Stephen Silvers (1998) has published a volume of commands from *A* to *Z*, each with from one to five illustrations; for example, *small*: touch the small triangle, touch a small object, draw a small house, print your first name in small letters (p. 209). This activity enables the student to grasp the concept without L1 interference.

Transition from TPR to TPRS

Although it is possible to teach an entire semester or year using TPR without storytelling, college students on the elementary level desire to move beyond it. My first experiments with just TPR consisted of about 3 weeks of TPR, followed by the use of a textbook that had no references to TPR. On the first day of class, students viewed the TPR video so that they could understand the methodology of the course without further explanation.[2] Immediately after the video came the first commands: "Stand up," "Sit down," and so forth, over and over again to the entire group and then to individuals. By recycling commands when integrating a new one, the teacher enables students to proceed very slowly from the known to the unknown. The students in my highly selective undergraduate institution did not like relying totally on aural skills and besieged me with requests to see the commands. Deviating from a pure TPR approach, I acquiesced by preparing handouts ahead of time with all the commands in writing but no English translation alongside, so that they would try to picture the action with the words, thereby bypassing English. Preparing the handouts ahead is possible because the teacher controls the amount of new lexical items presented daily. I limited myself to 20-24 each class and did not hand them out until the students were leaving the room, so that they would rely on the aural approach throughout the session. They responded very positively to this procedure and to two types of quizzes: (1) *oral quizzes*, in which three students at a time were present in the classroom and performed individual commands. (I believe that this tripartite grouping enables the students to learn even during the test by observing one another); and (2) *dictations*, which amounted to students' writing the commands.

An e-mail message to all students after the first day of class informed them about the method for the class:

> Teachers and students who have used TPRS before claim great success with the learningof German. It enables you to make progress quickly because you are not only using your mind but also your body in learning. A recent study of our students showed that ca. 63% are experiential learners, i.e., people who learn by moving and by experiencing physically the subject matter and not primarily by attending lectures. Thus you will be moving a lot in class, which should facilitate your retention of vocabulary. Please join in freely to maximize your success and to contribute to class spirit.[3]

Discussing the method via e-mail in combination with the Asher video eliminates the need to discuss the method in English in class.

Each year I taught this way, my students and I felt a letdown when, after 3 weeks of class, we progressed from TPR to the traditional textbook approach, but the students were also anxious to learn grammar, as most, if not all, expected that to be a part of their language learning. I tried retaining the commands, especially when students were learning vocabulary, but they and I became discouraged by the long lists, often 100 words, of vocabulary items in each chapter. In 3 decades of language teaching I had never been able to cope well with these long lists.

TPR was a good way of learning vocabulary; yet, because of all the new vocabulary in each chapter of our textbook, I could not sustain it for a whole term. I was aware of TPR materials that enabled one to continue with the method for a protracted time period. *Lernt Aktiv: Live Action German* is a manual that presents 68 command situations for the entire class, such as "Hide and Seek," "Taking a Pill," and "The Office Worker." One student gives the commands, and the others carry them out; then the roles are reversed. The rationale for this approach is well taken: "Totally experiencing the situation makes a strong impression and connects the words to something real, making learning much easier, more effective and more enjoyable" (Seely & Romijn, 1990, p. xxvi). This method seemed, however, to be better adapted to the secondary level and did not provide the type of context I was seeking. Thus, when I read an advertisement in an ACTFL newsletter in 1998 for a TPR Storytelling workshop, I decided to attend without any real conception of what the method implied, but with a vague hope that storytelling would provide a better context for all the loose vocabulary than traditional, even comprehension-based texts.

My Own TPRS Approach

Many of the teachers at the TPRS workshop were second-timers, anxious to get even better at TPRS. Some told that it had saved or reinvigorated their language programs. Recently I saw a similar claim in the AATG Listserve:

> More kids are going farther in the language. I asked my German 2 kids how many are going on to German 3. About 90% of them are. That will be the largest German 3 I've ever had. More kids are telling their friends how much they enjoy German. More kids than ever say that German is their favorite class. [4]

Impressed by the workshop, I decided to embark on TPRS as the method of instruction in elementary classes. On arriving home, I studied the TPRS materials, changed my textbook order to Blaine Ray's *Look, I Can Talk! Student Book in German* (1998, revised for 2000), and restructured the course.

With this method I am able to sustain the advantages of TPR (noted year after year by some students, who wrote on their course evaluations that the first 3 weeks of the course were their favorites), while moving on to the more challenging contexts provided by storytelling. I continue to teach by commands for 3 weeks or until students start speaking naturally, indicating that it is time to let them give one another and me commands for a few more classes. Much humor is generated by these commands and by the students' ability to tell me to jump up and down, run around the classroom, and throw my tie out the window. Much good will is also created as students talk more on campus about their "unusual" language class, in which the teacher actually takes off his tie and throws it and other objects out the window.

After the students are ready to talk and have practiced giving commands a while, one can begin with the stories in *Look, I Can Talk!* Ray explains his authoring of this book (1998) as follows: "My only question was how to keep the TPR experience going on to the advanced levels. This book is an attempt to solve that problem" (p. 1). Thus TPR Storytelling can be defined as the physical acting out of words and expressions in the context of simple stories. Ray's text is divided into 12 stories, each with a series of drawings and from 10 to 18 vocabulary words illustrating them. The stories range from "The Cat Story," a simple tale of possession, loss, and repossession of a cat, to "The Cow and the Monkey," a comparison of a poor monkey with a rich cow who comes to the aid of the monkey, to

"The Date," a more complex narration with all the preparations that go into the date, and a disaster which leads to an early departure for home. The brief vocabulary list does not discourage the students, as do those in most traditional language texts. In fact, one can augment them with a few more words that spring from the story and yet stay within manageable range.

Before beginning a story, one can preview the vocabulary using TPR, that is, via actions and gestures. While urging use of TPR, Ray (1998) warns, however, against overmodeling, which may tire and bore students: "We want students to be independent to act as soon as they feel comfortable and confident. The goal is minimum input for maximum output" (p. 14). Students all make the gestures, first with the instructor, then to each other, and then before the entire class. This process ensures that all learn the gestures well and have a chance to practice them amply before performing them for all their peers. Those teachers who need a guide to what gestures to do with each vocabulary word can refer to Ray's manual, where motions for hundreds of words are explained (Ray & Gross, 1998). At first I relied heavily on this manual, but I soon became comfortable with making up my own gestures for a word. One can also draw students more into the whole process by letting them decide on the gestures.

Since "The Lost Book" is a story with eight pictures, I would like to illustrate by means of it how I teach an entire TPRS story:

Day One: (a) The teacher illustrates, and students make gestures for vocabulary words 1-6, which have been previewed in the preceding class. (b) The teacher adds any supplementary vocabulary words to flesh out the story, (c) narrates frames 1-4, with students acting them out with gestures in pairs and before the entire class, and (d) discusses the present tense of verbs in context (by means of frames 1-4).

Day Two: (a) The teacher reviews vocabulary words 1-6 and adds gestures for 7-13. (b) Students review frames 1-4 in pairs and before the entire class. (c) The teacher adds frames 5-6 and (d) reviews the present tense, as illustrated in "The Lost Book."

Day Three: (a) Students review frames 5-6 in pairs and before the class and (b) complete the story with frames 7-8. (c) The teacher narrates, and students act out the story in pairs and before the class. (d) Students work on dative of place with examples from the story and (e) complete homework exercises 1-4 in class (true and false, complete the sentences, answer the questions, place the actions from the story in chronological order).

Day Four: (a) The class reviews the entire story, and (b) pairs of students demonstrate the story in front of the class. The first student narrates even frames while the second student performs gestures; then, the second student narrates odd frames, while the first student performs the gestures. (c) Exercise 5 is handed in. (Students write the story in their own words.) (d) Students work on accusative of motion towards a place with examples from the story.

Day Five: (a) The class reviews the entire story. (b) Students take part in pair demonstrations, and (c) using versions A and B, which they have prepared at home, students orally narrate in pairs and, in some cases, in front of the class.

Day Six: (a) Students complete versions A and B in front of the class and (b) hand in an original story (exercise 8). (c) Selected students tell their original story to partners, who perform gestures, and then to the class. (d) Then the class previews vocabulary for the next story.

On **Day One** the teacher emphasizes half of the vocabulary via the gestures, letting the students perform the gestures, first following the instructor, then with their eyes closed, in pairs and selectively before the class. Having students close their eyes allows the teacher to see if they really have internalized the gesture. When they have finished with the first four frames, students write them out for homework. Just as my spelling tests in TPR deviated from classic TPR, this written exercise is not part of the prescribed TPRS learning pattern. It adds a valuable written dimension, however, to the aural/oral skills which TPRS stresses. Even though the text of the story is reproduced on the back of the page with the frames, writing them out helps students pay attention to the details of the story and peculiarities of German spelling. About assigning homework, Asher (2000) says that it is not usually needed, "simply because retention from class to class is almost 100%" (sec. 3, p. 49), yet he acknowledges that each instructor will discover what produces the best results. Certainly my students expect and seem to appreciate the modest assignments I program into the course syllabus, and these can be done daily for maximum benefit.

On **Day Three,** to test the comprehension of the students, the teacher asks yes-and-no questions about the plot, as well as questions that require a factual answer, such as "What is the name of the girl?" Students thus learn the question format in L2 and be able to ask these questions later of their classmates. A fun activity that also keeps students focused consists of statements that contain mistakes and that they must correct (e.g., "The girl sits down on the desk," instead of "The girl sits down on the floor.").

Versions A and B are Ray's way of allowing students to be creative and not just to memorize the story at hand. These versions amount to various drawings without written text. It is important to encourage students not to memorize the stories because "parroting activities, including most memorized dialogues and mechanical drills, appear to do little to encourage the development of fluent conversational skills" (Dulay et al., 1982, p. 4). Thus, on **Days Five** and **Six**, I divide the class and have one side of the room provide narration to the drawings of version A to a partner, while the other side does version B. Since they are listening to their partner's version of A and then telling their own version B, students are deepening both their aural and oral skills. These versions are related to the main story but different enough to bring forth creativity. Students do a good job of filling in the details. Having the students tell the original story they wrote for homework to a partner and then to the class on **Day Six** is also satisfying both to student and teacher, as it shows what they have learned. One can also use props to supplement the gestures for the stories. Students, too, can bring in props or draw items, an excellent TPR activity, when they tell their own versions of the story at hand.

Grammar's Role in My TPRS Classes

In one term I complete 8 of the 12 stories in *Look, I Can Talk!* I could perhaps do more but prefer to do the 8 as thoroughly as possible and to spend some time each week on grammar. Ray's text has no grammar instruction or exercises, and in his *Teacher's Guidebook* (1998) relatively little is said about grammar. He cautions us, however, "Remember, a story is not a technique for introducing vocabulary and structures. A story is a technique for making a graceful transition from comprehension to production" (p. 12). Both he and Asher believe that grammar comes naturally by good modeling from the teacher and repetition of commands and stories by the students. Ray agrees with Krashen that little is gained by explicit rule instruction but does recommend to teachers who are required to use a certain textbook by their school districts that they use the text as a focal point to have students tell stories illustrating discrete-point grammatical features, such as the past tense, which are prominent in the text.

It is necessary, however, to do concerted grammar instruction–first, because students insist on it year after year and ask questions that elicit grammatical explanation, and second, because colleagues who teach these students in later semesters cannot identify with a completely natural approach. I had, moreover, been struggling for many years to integrate grammar into all facets of my teaching (Davidheiser, 1984, 1991).

Since I also sympathize with Krashen, Asher, and Ray, however, I decided to walk a middle ground and make sure the grammar instruction emanated from the story at hand. Both "The Cat Story" and "The Cow and the Monkey" contained ample instances of the accusative case in German with direct objects. I thus taught both the nominative as the subject and the accusative as the direct object when making the transition from the first to the second story. This approach gave the elementary students a chance to use and observe the two cases repeatedly before learning about them. I prepared transparencies illustrating the sentences from the stories with nominative and accusative cases and asked students in groups of three to create some of their own. My early research on grammar groups indicated to me that if students not only hear an explanation but are given an opportunity to create their own examples of it and submit them for perusal to their peers, they will have a much fuller comprehension of the grammar (Davidheiser, 1996).

The third story, "The Lost Book," contains examples of dative of place and accusative of motion towards a place, two concepts foreign to English. Using the story's already familiar sentences, students could compare and contrast these two pesky German grammar points. Again I devised transparencies for the grammar instruction and asked students to work in groups, exchanging and examining each other's original dative and accusative sentences. I continued this practice for each story, and by the end of the term I had covered what I considered most major grammar points.

Yet in the 2nd year of TPRS teaching I required students to purchase an inexpensive laminated grammar outline as a reference work (Limburg, 1996), because they desired a reference grammar. Several times throughout the term I also designed worksheets with the principal parts of strong verbs, but only those which appear in the stories. By the end of the eighth story I had a worksheet with all the principal parts on spreadsheets chronologically by story. This procedure allows students to reference each verb easily and to remain within the context of communicative grammar, not grammar for grammar's sake. Along with the regular oral quizzes on the stories, students were tested on these verbs from time to time. Sometimes in quizzes students would demonstrate ability to tell a story and then sit down and manipulate the verbs in writing.

Even though Krashen (1978) believes that "acquisition seems to occur best when language users focus on the message and not on the form" and even though he asserts that natural communication "is not met at all by manipulative-mechanical drills," he does, surprisingly, see value in teaching some rules like punctuation, spelling, "the third person singular morpheme, count and mass nouns, regular and irregular past tense of verbs"

to ESL learners (p. 25). I wholeheartedly agree with him and thus have created the verb lists for TPRS stories, as the German verbs are a challenge to learn. Communication can be aided if the students work on the forms of the verbs relative to a story. Verb lists divorced from a communicative context are less effective.

Grammar instruction begins during the 3-week TPR phase of the course, so that students are already familiar with basics of German grammar before they ever begin storytelling. Brief grammar allusions usually satisfy students' needs until the storytelling phase of the course, when there is more explicit instruction. This type of grammar illustration is possible because I deviate from the classic TPR approach from the first day of the course by giving students handouts, as stated, of all the commands at the end of each class period. I write next to certain sentences that a particular word is feminine, masculine, or neuter; or I state that a word is plural and give its singular too. In fact, one can do this in class orally because the German words for the genders and "singular" and "plural" are very close to English. The sheets serve then as written reinforcement of the grammar principle, yet the point is so brief that it does not impede the flow of rapid communication.

When doing the TPR Storytelling, I prepare grammar sheets for homework, such as the one after the first four stories of *Look, I Can Talk!*, which practices dative pronouns, verbs, and the genitive case. By using vocabulary from the stories themselves, students are enabled to contextualize the grammar and reinforce the stories, as they understand that grammar is simply an aid to listening, speaking, reading, and writing and not an end in itself. By walking this middle ground with grammar, I am able to satisfy the learning needs of my students with their strong academic backgrounds and high SAT scores and still impart the benefits of a natural approach to language learning.

How to Adapt TPRS to Any Textbook

Many secondary teachers are not permitted to choose their own texts, and even when they can, they must remain with a text for a number of years. What can one do in such a situation? This is exactly what my wife, a German and Spanish teacher at Franklin County High School in Winchester, Tennessee, faced when she returned from the TPRS workshop in 1998. She would have to stick with her present text for 4 more years. To avoid infringing on Ray's copyright by photocopying, she took topics in her present text and composed stories about them, writing stories for three chapters a semester. The 2nd year she asked advanced level students to do some of this work, a strategy which worked out amazingly well. The students them-

selves provided versions A and B for the stories and were also very willing to illustrate them. The results were phenomenal. The students thoroughly enjoy seeing their drawings on transparencies and hearing their classmates tell the stories to accompany their drawings. Ray is a great believer in having students draw:

> Do you ever ask your students to create stories of their own? Absolutely. I do this after my students are comfortable and proficient with the twelve stories in my *Look, I Can Talk!* Then I will ask my students to line out a grid on a piece of paper and in each box draw a picture to tell a story. Some will be reticent because they believe that they cannot draw. I reassure them that anything is satisfactory, even stick figures. They draw pictures in each box to tell an original story. Then I invite them to write the story in the target language and, using an overhead transparency, tell the story to the class. Be ready for a productive experience that is dazzling entertainment. They will create wonderful stories with twists and O'Henry endings. And in the process, they are becoming more fluent in speaking, reading, and writing in the target language. (Ray, 1998, p. 19)

Ray (1998) seems right on target when he notes that making up mini-stories from the assigned textbook will cause the teacher extra work the first academic year but will result in increased retention of students: "In the end, don't be surprised if your students tell you: 'The only thing I remember are the stories and the vocabulary in them'" (p. 16). Franklin County High School students have had similar experiences and enthusiastic reactions.

TPRS as Active Learning

Yet even with the success of story illustrations at Franklin County High School and despite Ray's words, college students seem to have passed the age of wanting to draw for class, that is, except for the few art majors. I, therefore, do not make much use of this skill on the college level. Still, my students act out commands, make gestures to illustrate vocabulary, point to the pictures in the text to show that they have understood a vocabulary word, and tell stories in pairs and before the entire class, all of which make use of the musculoskeletal system, thus reaching more students and making learning German an active experience.

Several years ago two developments at my university combined to facilitate my instituting TPRS as my method of elementary German instruction. The University of the South began to advocate active learning and to en-

courage the faculty to rethink their teaching to incorporate it. First, it offered two faculty workshops on learning styles. I attended the first and found to my amazement that well over 90% of the faculty members present were conceptual learners. These bookish types can learn in a very traditional classroom and are prone to teaching in this way without taking account of the various learning styles of the students in their classes.

The head of the counseling service presented the surprising results of a study of University of the South students: 26% of the students surveyed were conceptualizers, who were introverted, intellectually oriented, good at making connections, bookworms, and high achievers; 11% were creative learners, who were socially oriented, reactive and flexible, spontaneous, creative, and average achievers; and 63% were experiential learners, who were physically oriented, socially active, moderately extroverted, doers and leaders, who preferred concrete experience and structure and might receive lower grades despite hard work. These types along with the creative learners especially need active learning. I was amazed to find such a large number of experiential learners at this school, rated highly selective and among the top 25 liberal arts colleges in the nation. We were encouraged to bear this diversity in mind and to teach to all learning styles, making use of various techniques, at least some of which would, indeed, reach everyone. TPRS would later turn out for me to be an excellent way of reaching the great majority of my students. In fact, even the conceptualizers responded favorably. They, after all, can learn in any environment. Muscular movement strengthens long-term retention for all learners.

Second, my university created The Center for Teaching, an office which encouraged experimentation with teaching styles and pedagogical growth. I applied for one of the first grants and in 1998 attended the workshop on TPRS conducted by Valeri Marsh and Carol Gaab in Scottsdale, Arizona. Participants there learned to tell a mini-story in Hebrew, a plot with only a few words and expressions, which can then be expanded to a full story. This practice sensitized us to our students by placing us in their shoes and also gave us confidence that we could master the very skills we were seeking to impart to them.

A manual available at the workshop outlined these reasons for the success of TPRS: It (1) provides a language-rich environment, (2) promotes foreign language learning by what sounds right, (3) provides natural acquisition in humorous, nonstressful situations, (4) does not stress grammatical instruction, but allows grammatical correctness by creating artificial barriers via the story line and context in the classroom, (5) communicates to both sides of the brain, thereby allowing permanent language acquisition, (6) teaches students to think in pictures rather than to use translation from

their native language, (7) does not force speech before the student is ready or encourage simple regurgitation, and (8) promotes long-term memory because it is visual, physical, acoustical, and contextual (Forward & Ogle, 1997, p. 21). Since introducing TPRS, I have indeed found that the method aids retention per se but also, as all practitioners suggest, leads to much humor in the classroom and imparts the feeling to students that they are embarked on a unique but effective way of language learning.

Among the many pedagogical materials I have accumulated over the years is a handout of learning outcomes by William Glasser, listing the effectiveness of various learning methods. We learn . . .

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we both see and hear
- 70% of what is discussed with others
- 80% of what we experience personally
- 95% of what we TEACH to someone else.

TPRS activities fall solidly into the 70%, 80%, and 95% categories, namely those of discussing with others, experiencing personally, and teaching others, while most traditional classroom instruction leans heavily on reading, hearing, seeing, and perhaps discussing with others. Three years ago a graduate of my university who is a member of its alumni advisory council attended my TPRS class and was stunned by the amount of communication by elementary students. He recalled taking German decades ago with little German spoken by faculty and students. His presence and comments afterwards helped me to realize again how effectively TPRS facilitates communication in a second language and how far we have come in L2 education. When students see me on campus, they now have a context to speak to me in German, sometimes simply stating snatches of a story and other times transferring what they learned to whatever it is they wish to tell me. The point is that the stories give them a context in which to communicate.

One problem that surfaced in my elementary courses after a term of TPRS was that students had trouble reading simple texts when we moved to the second term, and I began to upgrade the role of reading in the course. I had considered the printed stories in *Look, I Can Talk!* to be reading, as well as oral practice texts. This perception did not turn out to be the case, at least at the level I felt necessary. Asher (1972) claimed early along that reading ability accompanied listening comprehension:

> The results demonstrated that a keen level of listening comprehension could be achieved in about one-half the usual training time. Even though there was no systematic training in reading, the experimental group achieved a reading skill that was comparable with a control group which emphasized reading and writing. (p. 139)

I had hoped for similar results, but my students were hardly able to cope with the texts I interspersed throughout the second term along with the next level of TPRS stories. These texts were short detective stories created by Langenscheidt publishers for elementary students, yet my students were having great difficulty with them. Still I persisted for several years and now plan for my next first-term TPRS course to include more brief readings, if only those four in the TPRS text which I have been unable to cover until now. I may use them as readings, and not as stories to learn in the traditional TPRS mode, to provide a better balance of skills and to ease students more comfortably into the second-term curriculum.

Asher and Ray are strong advocates of the continuance of TPR and TPRS into the advanced levels of second language learning. Ray cautions educators not to view the progression from elementary to advanced levels as a pyramid of ascending blocks achieved in a left-brain fashion but rather, following Asher, as an ever-increasing balloon of comprehension within which appear three gradually expanding tiny balloons of speaking, reading, and writing. Ray believes that the first balloon is blown by the wind of TPR and the other three by that of storytelling. This remains within the sphere of right-brain activity. He posits that by referring to "advanced" students and emphasizing the left side of the brain, teachers cause the heavy casualties from their courses that they have experienced over the years (Ray, 1998, p. 20).

While I can find nothing to refute Ray's and Asher's views on advanced learning, I have not been able, for several reasons, to take TPRS beyond the second term of Elementary German. My students seem to want to move on beyond storytelling, though they have genuinely enjoyed it for the two terms. Furthermore, college Intermediate German attracts a hodgepodge of students who are continuing and those who are just entering the class from high school and generally have no knowledge of TPRS. With these students I simply continue to use commands on occasion and ask them to gesture and act things out from time to time. For those teachers on the secondary level who have a homogeneous group of students in third semester and beyond, there are texts for French, German, and Spanish at the second and third levels. Their titles are intriguing: *Look, I Can Talk More!* and *Look I'm Still Talking!*

Conclusion

Blaine Ray's texts and the texts his invention of TPRS has spawned provide the primary literature of TPRS. Very little secondary literature, however, exists on the subject. I hope that this article will help to close that gap. Even the latest edition of Omaggio Hadley's otherwise definitive study of second-language-teaching methodology never mentions Ray or TPRS, though she treats Asher and TPR (Omaggio Hadley, 2001). However, increasing numbers of teachers are attempting to use storytelling and are availing themselves of the seminars and workshops offered by Ray, Gaab and Marsh, and Forward and Ogle. Todd McKay, too, offers workshops for elementary teachers and others and has authored works for that level (McKay, 2000). My wife and I have offered several workshops together, and, acting as a professional consultant for AATG, I continue to do so. FLTEACH and AATG listserves are full of discussion of TPRS. See <http://cortland.edu/www/flteach/flteach.html> and <http://www.aatg.org/member_services/lists/aatg-l.html>.

The advantages of Total Physical Response Storytelling are considerable:

- Pronunciation is better than with other methods of FL learning.
- Students remember the vocabulary better.
- TPRS is a low-anxiety method of FL learning.
- TPRS is fun, lots of fun.
- It is a good method for all learners–that is, for conceptualizers, creatives, and experiencers; or for auditory learners, visual learners, and kinesthetic learners.
- TPRS is a natural way to learn.
- It impresses administrators because of its quick results.

There is great interest in this effective method, and I believe it will continue to grow in usage.

Notes

[1] This book has now been through six editions. It has also spawned related materials, such as Ramiro García (2000), *The Graphics Book* in English, Spanish, French or German; Ramiro García (2001), *Instructor's Notebook: How to Apply TPR for Best Results*; Ramiro García (1997), *Instructor's Notebook: TPR Homework Exercises*; *Ramiro* García (1982), *TPR Bingo*; Ramiro García (1988), separate French, German, and Spanish versions of *TPR Bingo;* Stephen Silvers (1988b), *Listen and Perform: TPR Student Book*; Stephen Silvers (1988a), *The Command Book*; Laura Ayala and Margaret Woodruff-Wieding (2000), *Favorite Games for FL-ESL Classes*; Margaret S. Woodruff (1986), *Comprehension Based Language Lessons*: *Level One*; Joanne Klopp (1998), *Actionlogues*.

[2] Asher's (1993) video is *Strategy for Second Language Learning* (VHS, color, 23 minutes). Although it applies to any language, its emphasis is on German. Videos are also available with a focus on French, Japanese, and Spanish. The video is available through Sky Oaks Productions, Los Gatos, CA.

[3] Instructor's handout on first day of TPRS class.

[4] This AATG Listserve message was from Rob Williams on Feb. 11, 2001.

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Understanding Hispanic Culture through Music: The Theme of Nostalgia

5

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In the past 2 decades, foreign language practitioners have increasingly come to appreciate the effectiveness of music as a valuable resource to enhance lessons in both language and culture. The professional literature reflects the wide range of linguistic and cultural learning objectives that can be achieved through the use of music.[1] In urging teachers to incorporate more culture into their classes and to make connections between foreign language and other disciplines, the 1996 *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* confirm the appropriateness of music in the classroom.[2] And in recent years, with the ready availability of music through the World Wide Web, the arguments for using music have become even more compelling.[3] By all estimates, interest in the pedagogical uses of music will continue to increase.

The affective aspects of music are at least as important as the specific elements of language or culture that may be reinforced through song.[4] Music is a universal language that can impart a particular mood of joy, melancholy, excitement, or reflection, evoking in the listener a powerful emotional response. One frequent response elicited by music is that of nostalgia–either nostalgia for the homeland, for a distant past, or both. Familiar melodies can elicit poignant memories, transporting a person back in time to one's childhood or to a faraway homeland.

This feeling of nostalgia becomes even more powerful when the lyrics of the song offer poetic or evocative descriptions of that same distant time or place. In Hispanic culture there are dozens of songs that combine a haunting melody with lyrics that sing the praises of the composer's hometown or region.[5] This article proposes an instructional unit on the theme of nostalgia, based on Hispanic songs that express affection or longing for the homeland. The unit is designed for an intermediate or advanced Spanish class.

Rationale and Pedagogical Approach

Hispanic songs of nostalgia constitute a valuable resource for the foreign language class, a resource that until now has not been fully utilized.

The lyrics serve as a culturally authentic text that may convey either or both of two closely related Hispanic perspectives: a profound affection for the *patria chica*, or homeland, and a longing for the past. Although nostalgia is a universal attitude, it is especially prevalent in Hispanic culture. In our mobile society it may be difficult to imagine the strong emotional bond that most Latinos feel with the land of their birth.

The lyrics also offer instruction in geography and history of various Hispanic countries, as these songs mention specific places, events, or both. A song may include poetic descriptions of landscapes, monuments, plazas, local heroes, or other features that the composer associates with home. The music itself can be studied as a product of the culture where it originated, with characteristic rhythms, instrumentation, and musical styles.[6]

Songs of nostalgia may also be used to achieve a variety of communicative objectives. Listening to the lyrics affords practice in aural comprehension. Oral and written expansion activities tap into the students' own childhood memories and provide communicative practice in past tenses, especially the imperfect. Also, the songs provide a springboard for communicative activities requiring higher level thinking skills, as students explore issues related to love of homeland, immigration, and cross-cultural assimilation.

Perhaps most importantly, the inherent ability of the music to evoke feelings of nostalgia reinforces the culturally rich lyrics. The music touches students on an affective level, thereby increasing motivation and interest. On both an affective and cognitive level, the music of nostalgia appeals to students while it instructs, developing empathy and raising cross-cultural awareness.

Of all the Hispanic songs of nostalgia, the most poignant ones are those written by composers who are far from their native land. These songs generally convey a deep yearning for an irretrievable past, as well as poetic descriptions of the homeland. For my unit on the music of nostalgia, I have chosen three songs written by Hispanics who were far from their homeland: "Guantanamera," with lyrics by José Martí, "México lindo," written by Jesús Monge Ramírez and made famous by singer Jorge Negrete, and "Mi viejo San Juan" by Noel Estrada. The lyrics express the composers' affection for Cuba, Mexico, and Puerto Rico respectively. The cadence of the music reinforces the feeling of nostalgia and may evoke similar feelings in the listener.

Although all three songs have the same underlying theme, a comparison of the lyrics reveals slightly different emphases in each one. Whereas "México lindo" and "Guantanamera" contain references to specific geographic features of the homeland, "Mi viejo San Juan" focuses almost

entirely on the emotional aspects of nostalgia and emigration. Because the concrete images of "Guantanamera" and "México lindo" provide the most obvious and accessible comparisons, we study these two songs first, followed by "Mi viejo San Juan."

The pedagogical approach suggested here for the study of these songs is modeled on the "whole language approach" to teaching a song, as described by Barry and Pellissier (1995). In their words, the strategies used "approach the song holistically; that is, they are more concerned with an overall appreciation of the song as a conveyer of cultural themes than they are with teaching vocabulary or grammatical structures."[7] We begin by considering the overall effect of each song and gradually focus on more specific details. It should be understood that all classroom activities related to these songs are conducted in Spanish. The lyrics to the songs, with English translations, appear in an appendix to this article.

Pre-Listening Activities

In the first pre-listening activity, students are asked to brainstorm about what elements might appear in a song about one's homeland. Might a composer describe landscapes, people, or activities associated with the homeland? Would the composer be likely to mention specific places or express a more general sense of nostalgia? The students are asked to think of American songs that express nostalgia for a specific region. One frequently cited example is "Country Roads," in which the singer pleads, "Take me home to the place where I belong: West Virginia, Blue Ridge Mountains, take me home!" Other examples might include, Ray Charles's "Georgia on my Mind" or "New York, New York."

As a next step, with maps of Mexico and Cuba, students try to predict which geographic features might be mentioned in songs about these places. For Cuba, they may guess the sea, mountains, and the tropical sun. This map-study is good vocabulary practice as well as a mini-lesson in geography. In the case of Mexico, the tremendous geographic diversity makes predicting more difficult. Will the singer mention the cactus of the desert, the snow-capped volcanoes, or tropical beaches?

First Audition

By this time students are eager to hear the songs. The first time, the students simply listen to the two songs for their overall effect. Are these songs happy or sad? Are they upbeat or melancholy? Do they seem to evoke feelings of nostalgia? Do the students prefer one song to the other? There are no right or wrong answers here, just reactions or emotional responses.

In most recorded versions of "Guantanamera" the listener hears a rhythm characteristic of Caribbean music, whereas "México lindo" is sung in what can be described as a Mexican *ranchera* style. In other words, the rhythm and style of these songs reflect the respective countries from which they come. Attentive students will notice that "México lindo" has two contrasting moods, one in the verses and another in the chorus. The music of the chorus is more melancholy and plaintive, with a slower tempo than that of the verses, because the lyrics in the chorus express the composer's fear of dying far away from his homeland, while the verses describe the beauty of Mexico.

Second Audition

Again students listen to the songs without access to the written text. This time they concentrate on understanding the words. Working in pairs or small groups, students try to decipher as many words as possible. As a follow-up, various groups can share what they heard, and the teacher can write a composite list of words on the board.

Hypothesizing

Basing their knowledge on the key words they have understood, the students now form hypotheses about the content of the songs. What seems to be the theme of each of them? Which country is described in each song? What emotions does each composer express?

Third Audition.

Students then receive the printed lyrics and have the opportunity to check their hypotheses as well as their comprehension. Using circumlocution in Spanish, the instructor can clarify any unfamiliar words. Finally, students are invited to sing along with the music, keeping in mind the song's original intent. Experience has shown that students sing with greater conviction if asked to imagine that they are actually natives of the country described in the song.

Close Examination of Text: Comparison of Two Songs

With lyrics in hand, students begin a closer examination of the text. Working in pairs or small groups, they fill in a grid that allows them to compare the two songs. At the top of the grid are the titles of the songs, effectively creating two columns of information. Along the left-hand side

are listed (in Spanish) various categories, such as nationality of the composer, landscapes, colors, plants, and animals.

	"Guantanamera"	"México lindo"
Composer's nationality		
Landscapes mentioned		
Colors mentioned		
Plants / vegetation mentioned		
Animals mentioned		
Information about composer		
Further information		
Reference to death		

The grid enables students to compare geographic features mentioned in the two songs. "México lindo" refers to "volcanes y praderas" (volcanoes and meadows), while "Guantanamera" refers to Cuba's lush green palm trees and red blossoms, as well as the sea, the mountain, and the arroyo.

Farther down the grid, students are asked to compare *información respecto al compositor.* Although the songs contain no specific biographical information about the composer of either "México lindo" or "Guantanamera," students immediately note that Martí describes himself as "un hombre sincero." Students may also conclude that both composers are poetic, sensitive to nature, and deeply nostalgic about their respective countries. In fact, Jesús Monge Ramírez feels such a close relationship with Mexico that he addresses his homeland directly, using the familiar *tú* form of address: "México lindo y querido, si muero lejos de ti . . ." (Beautiful, beloved Mexico, if I die far from you . . .)

The last category in the grid, the composer's "reference to death," leads students to discover that José Martí, before he dies, wishes to "echar los versos del alma" (sing out the verses of his soul, i.e., express the beauty of his homeland). Jesús Monge Ramírez, the Mexican, states that if he dies far from Mexico, he would like for people to pretend he is asleep and send him back for burial in his homeland. These sentiments embody two attitudes characteristic of Hispanic culture: first, a fervent wish to express in poetry the beauty of one's homeland, and second, the desire to be buried at home for eternal rest.

At this point the teacher may wish to provide some historical background. José Martí published his famous collection of poems, *Versos*

sencillos, in 1891, while he was in the United States lobbying for support for Cuban independence from Spain. Both a journalist and a poet, Martí missed the beauty of his native Cuba. Ironically, he was granted the wish that he expressed in the opening lines of the song. He died fighting for Cuban independence in 1895, but with his soulful "versos del alma," he immortalized the beauty of his homeland. In the 1940s, Cuban musician Julián Orbón set Martí's words to the now familiar music of Guantanamera, using the *guajira*, a rhythm characteristic of the Cuban countryside. Pete Seeger's recording of the song in the 1960s gave it international exposure. The song is now a favorite among Cuban expatriates, often bringing tears to their eyes as they recall the beauty of their tropical homeland.[8]

Ironically, Jorge Negrete, the Mexican singer most often associated with "México lindo," also got his wish as expressed in the song. Although he died outside Mexico, he was sent home to be buried "bajo los magueyales" (under the maguey plants). Just as the song "Guantanamera," is especially meaningful to Cuban-Americans, "México lindo" is a favorite song of Mexican expatriates, who comprise 66% of the 32.8 million Hispanics in the United States today.[9]

The urge to return to the homeland before dying is also expressed in the third song of this unit, "Mi viejo San Juan." This song by Noel Estrada is not as explicit as the other two in its description of landscapes. Rather, the composer focuses on his own feelings, expressing a profound longing for a distant past in Puerto Rico. This song, the lengthiest and most poignant of the three, is likely to inspire the most student discussion. "Mi viejo San Juan" can be introduced with strategies similar to those described earlier. The first audition of the song focuses on the song's overall emotional effect. With the second audition, students attempt to discern as many words as possible. Gradually, as students concentrate on the words, they will realize that this composer is a sensitive man who is not afraid to express his feelings. He mentions tender memories of young love and lost love in San Juan, and then tells us that destiny sent him away to "una extraña nación" (a strange country).

Once students have received a printed version of the lyrics, they are instructed to create a third column on the aforementioned grid. Working in pairs or small groups, they fill in as much information as possible about "Mi viejo San Juan." In doing so, they note that Noel Estrada, like Martí and Monge Ramírez, is sensitive, poetic, and nostalgic. The years have passed, his hair has turned white, and he longs to return to Puerto Rico before he dies. He is melancholy and possibly bitter about his destiny that took him away from his native Puerto Rico.

Expanding on the Theme of Nostalgia

After completing the grid, students have before them the basic vocabulary for discussing the theme of nostalgia. The class discussion begins with content questions to check for comprehension: Which aspects of the homeland do these composers mention? What can we learn about the composers themselves from the songs? These questions provide a point of departure for a discussion of more complex issues of emigration and cultural adaptation.

The theme of cultural assimilation offers rich possibilities for class activities that raise cross-cultural awareness and stimulate higher level thinking skills. Students may be surprised to realize that the "extraña nación" mentioned in the song, "Mi viejo San Juan" is the United States. Working in small groups or brainstorming together as a class, students can speculate as to which aspects of life in the United States might seem "strange" to a Puerto Rican immigrant. Why might it be difficult to adapt here? Students may mention language, foods, customs, climate, or other aspects of American life.

Through this activity, students begin to develop empathy and to see their own culture from another perspective. For further exploration of this theme, we could invite a Puerto Rican, Mexican, or Cuban immigrant to class for an informal ethnographic interview. Students might ask the guests to describe what they miss about their home country and what initially seemed most "strange" about life in the United States. What kinds of experiences in the United States trigger memories of the home country? Does the person hope or expect to return home? Will the United States ever feel like home? Not surprisingly, students who have studied the nostalgia unit discussed in this article have proven to be more receptive to–and curious about–Hispanic guests than students in other classes. We could also assign students to interview a Mexican, Cuban, or Puerto Rican outside of class, in the community. The advantage of this assignment is that it results in a greater variety of ethnographic data, which students can then share with their classmates.

Closely related to cross-cultural assimilation is the topic of Latino immigration into the United States. Why are so many Latinos far from their homeland, particularly since they long to be back in the *patria chica*? Most students are aware that Cuban immigrants came to the United States for political reasons, to flee the Marxist regime of dictator Fidel Castro. Mexicans, by contrast, are drawn to the United States primarily by economic opportunities. The hourly minimum wage in the United States is approximately 10 times that of Mexico.

Fewer students can explain why there are so many Puerto Ricans in the United States. In fact, Puerto Rico is one of the most densely populated regions in Latin America. Crowded conditions in parts of Puerto Rico, plus job opportunities in the mainland United States, have resulted in tremendous emigration from Puerto Rico. Also, Puerto Ricans carry United States passports and have none of the immigration concerns faced by other Latin Americans.

Students in our foreign language classes may be too young to experience the profound degree of nostalgia expressed by the composers of the three songs in this unit. Nevertheless, our students have memories of their own childhood. Recalling such memories affords students an ideal opportunity to practice past aspect, that is, the preterite and imperfect tenses. Students can conduct paired interviews to learn about the childhood years of their conversation partners. Where did the students live? Where did they play? What were their favorite games, foods, and television programs?

Of particular interest for our purposes in this unit are students' memories of moving from one city to another. How did students feel about leaving behind all that was familiar? What did they miss? How long did it take them to adapt to their new home? If our students found moving to a new city or state a trying experience, the teacher can point out that adapting to life in a new country–with a different language, culture, and customs–is a much more daunting challenge.

As a follow-up to our discussion of childhood memories, we could invite other Hispanic guests to class, to learn about their childhood back in the home country. Students usually find this activity fascinating, as it both underscores the universality of childhood and instructs us about interesting differences in childhood activities.

At the beginning of this unit, students called to mind several American songs dealing with nostalgia. To come full circle, we conclude by asking students to compose a poem or song about their own hometown or region. They can begin by creating a semantic map, with the name of their town or state in a circle in the center. Around this circle students write (in Spanish) nouns or adjectives that they associate with that place. Working with that vocabulary, each student can then fashion these images into a poem, song, or essay.

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, this unit integrates all of the "Five *C*'s" described in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996): *Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities*. In the area of *Communication*, students listen to the song, write down information about it, discuss themes related to the songs, interview Hispanics on related themes, and finally write their own original song, thus practicing the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication.

This unit also clearly addresses the second "C," that is, *Cultures*. The songs themselves are *products* of Hispanic culture, with rhythms and musical styles that reflect the countries of the songs' origins. Although nostalgia for the homeland may be experienced by immigrants from anywhere, the lyrics of these songs convey the special *perspectives* of natives of Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba who yearn for their own *patria chica*. Their perspectives are important for our students to understand, since these are precisely the three Hispanic countries with the highest number of immigrants in the United States today.[10]

The *Connections* standard is addressed as students learn about geography, history, and immigration issues through the study of a Spanish-language text. For an expansion activity, students can turn to the Internet to discover more information about the countries where various songs originated. As students contemplate which aspects of United States culture might seem strange to a newcomer, they make *Comparisons* between two cultures. Finally, students go out into the *Community* to conduct ethnographic interviews with Hispanics who may be experiencing nostalgia.

In conclusion, this unit on nostalgia taps into a universal theme. If students have any doubt about the universality of nostalgia, we need only remind them of Hollywood's Extra Terrestrial (E.T.), who plaintively called for "Hooome" near the end of the film. With this unit we have exploited both the affective, emotional impact of music and the culturally inspired lyrics to teach about Hispanic culture, practiced all three modes of communication, and raised awareness of our students' own culture. As a final question, we might ask, "If the composer of any of these three songs were our friend, what could we do to make him feel more at home in his new 'strange' country?" In answering this question, students may become more empathetic and culturally sensitive citizens of the world.

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Notes

1 For example, Purcell (1992) demonstrates the use of Spanish songs to reinforce pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and grammar. Willis and Mason (1994) recommend the use of contemporary Latin popular music to teach language and motivate students. Delière and Lafayette (1985) describe a unit they developed on French culture, based on several songs with a similar theme. Griffin (1988) recommends studying Latin American culture through a country's folk music. Abrate (1983) and Failoni (1993) propose a wide variety of strategies for using music to teach both language and culture. Barry and Pellissier (1995) propose a "whole language approach" to teaching music. These are only a few of the helpful articles available on this subject. For ideas on using music for FLES, see Sporborg (1998).

2 See the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996).

3 Some sites for Latin music that have proven popular with Spanish students include the following: < www.sonymusiclatin.com >, which permits the user to select English or Spanish text to read detailed biographies of artists; < www.picadillo.com > with text in English and Spanish and links to web pages of Latin artists; and <www.universal.com.mx >, which provides a catalogue of contemporary popular music from throughout Latin America. The text is all in Spanish, as the website is based in Mexico City. Links are available to other Hispanic sites.

4 See Trapp (1991) for a discussion of various classroom uses of music to stimulate, calm, or motivate students. See also Barry and Pellissier (1995) for comments on the affective power of music.

5 The 1999 video, *México de mis recuerdos*, features 10 songs composed in praise of various Mexican cities. Each musical selection provides a backdrop to stunning photographic images of the city or region described in the song. Available at Comunicorp, Dallas, TX. Telephone: (672) 716-0290; e-mail: < diegolastra@prodigy.net >.

6 For an excellent description of the origin of various Latin rhythms and musical styles, see Leymarie (1997).

7 See Barry and Pellissier, pp. 17-18.

8 For a complete translation of Martí's *Versos sencillos* and information on the origin of "Guantanamera," see Fountain (2000).

[9] For up-to-date information on Latinos in the United States, go to the U.S. Census Bureau's website, < www.census.gov >. Go to the search box and type the words "Hispanic population" or "Latino population."

[10] See < www.census.gov >.

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Appendix

Guantanamera
(José Martí / Julián Orbón)

Yo soy un hombre sincero
De donde crece la palma. (2x)
Y antes de morirme
Quiero echar mis versos del alma.

Mi verso es de un verde claro
Y de un carmín encendido; (2x)
Mi verso es un ciervo herido
Que busca en el monte amparo.

Con los pobres de la tierra
Quiero yo mi suerte echar. (2x)
El arroyo de la sierra
Me complace igual que el mar.

Guantanamera, Guajira,
Guantanamera.

Guantanamera
(words by José Martí,
music by J.Orbón)

I am a sincere man
From where the palm tree grows
And before I die,
I want to sing out the
verses of my soul.

My verse is of a light green
And of a flaming carmine red;
My verse is a wounded deer
That seeks refuge on the
mountain.

With the poor people of the earth
I want to cast my lot.
The stream bed of the mountains
Calms me as much as the sea.

Girl from Guantanamo,
Peasant girl.
[translation mine]

México lindo y querido
(por Jesús Monge Ramírez)

Voz de la guitarra mía,
Al despertar la mañana,
Quiero cantar mi alegría
A mi tierra mexicana.

Yo le canto a sus volcanes,
A sus praderas y flores,
Que son como talismanes
Del amor de mis amores.

Coro:
México lindo y querido,
Si muero lejos de ti,
Que digan que estoy dormido,
Y que me traigan aquí.

Que me entierren en la sierra,
Al pie de los magueyales,
Y que me cubra la tierra,
Que es cuna de hombres cabales.

Beautiful, Beloved Mexico
(by Jesús Monge Ramírez)

(With the) voice of my guitar,
When the morning awakens,
I want to sing of my happiness
To my Mexican land.

I sing to her volcanos,
To her meadows and flowers,
Which are like good luck charms
Of my greatest love.

Chorus:
Beautiful, beloved Mexico,
If I die far from you,
Let them say that I am asleep
And let them bring me here.

Let them bury me in the mountains
At the foot of the maguey plants
And let them cover me with the earth
That is the cradle of honest men.
[translation mine]

"México lindo"
by Jesús Monge Ramírez
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En mi viejo San Juan
(por Noel Estrada)

En mi viejo San Juan
Cuántos sueños forjé
En mis años de infancia.
Mi primera ilusión
Y mis cuitas de amor
Son recuerdos del alma.

Una tarde partí
Hacia extraña nación,
Pues lo quiso el destino,
Pero mi corazón
Se quedó frente al mar
En mi viejo San Juan.

Adiós, adiós, adiós,
Borinquen querido.
Adiós, mi diosa del mar,
Me voy, pero un día volveré

A buscar mi querer,
Soñar otra vez
En mi viejo San Juan.

Pero el tiempo pasó
Y el destino burló
Mi terrible nostalgia.
Y no pude volver
Al San Juan que yo amé,
Pedacito de patria.

Mi cabello blanqueó,
Y mi vida se va,
Ya la muerte me llama.
Y no quiero morir
Alejado de ti
Puerto Rico del alma.

In My Old San Juan
(by Noel Estrada)

In my old San Juan
How many dreams I forged
In the years of my childhood.
My first illusion
And my disappointments in love
Are memories of the soul.

One afternoon I departed
Toward a strange country,
This was destiny's wish.
But my heart
Remained facing the sea
In my old San Juan.

Farewell, farewell, farewell,
Beloved Puerto Rico.
Farewell, my sea goddess
I am going away, but one day I will return

To look for my love,
To dream once again
In my old San Juan.

But time passed,
And destiny mocked
My terrible nostalgia.
And I couldn't return
To the San Juan that I loved,
Little piece of my homeland.

My hair turned white,
My life is slipping away,
Death is already calling me,
And I don't want to die
Far away from you,
Puerto Rico of my soul.

[translation mine]

EN MI VIEJO SAN JUAN
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Enhancing the Study of International Business, Foreign Languages, and the Nonlanguage Aspects of Intercultural Communication

6

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In 1995 the administration at Norfolk State University made a commitment to improve international studies with a view to producing more globally competitive graduates, in line with America's recognition of the need to strengthen its international competitiveness. In furtherance of that commitment, the university created an Office of International Studies and appointed a Director of International Studies and Programs to coordinate efforts in international education. This iniative was in addition to existing programs that helped strengthen international education, such as offering college degrees in French and Spanish and courses in German and Japanese, and the establishment of a comprehensive modern foreign language learning center and a multicultural enrichment and learning resource center.

The School of Business faculty recognizes globalization and communication as two of the most important competencies in the professional development of our students. In 1990 the School of Business earned accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International). As part of the accreditation effort, international courses were introduced, such as International Marketing, International Finance, and International Accounting. Globalization components were also incorporated into various courses in the School of Business curriculum. For example, a module dealing with international issues was introduced into the Operations Management course. These modifications were especially significant, given the fact that students at Norfolk State University come from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds and have not been exposed to globalization issues. Many of them are the first members of their extended families to go to college.

It was felt that there was a need to strengthen the study of international entrepreneurship, international business languages, and the nonlanguage aspects of intercultural communication. To verify this need, a sample of students was surveyed on their knowledge of foreign languages, foreign cultures, and the perception of how their international competitiveness would

be affected by this knowledge. We also surveyed the students' level of interest in a project that would seek to boost the study of international business, foreign cultures, and the nonlanguage aspects of intercultural communication. The consensus of the survey results was that because of their backgrounds, our students would benefit enormously from such a project.

The outcome of this exploratory survey was the submission of a grant proposal to the Department of Education for funds to implement this project, which had four objectives:

1. To strengthen international course offerings by creating a number of new courses and revising selected existing ones;
2. To strengthen library holdings in the international area;
3. To train faculty on internationalization and integration of culture into curricula through forums and workshops; and
4. To expose students to international issues through a series of international forums and to enhance student and faculty awareness of the role of technology, especially the Internet, in global business.

Background

The School of Business core curriculum included a foreign language requirement of six credit hours of the same language, in addition to courses in international business in several functional areas. Unfortunately, these requirements proved insufficient to provide our students with the skills that would allow them to compete within a global economy. The consensus among faculty members at the School of Business was that there was an important component (or several) missing that precluded our graduates from effectively competing at the international level.

After reviewing the literature written on the subject of cross-cultural communication and exploring how other institutions faced with the same dilemma had attempted to resolve this problem, the authors, both faculty members at the School of Business, decided to try to develop a strategy that would satisfy the needs of our constituents–business students, actual and prospective employers, and nonbusiness students interested in the discipline. A theoretical framework was used to understand the language acquisition process over which a cross-cultural strategy could be developed for School of Business majors. One theoretical framework employed was the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). These standards, as implemented by the South Carolina State Department of Education, stated:

> Communication, or communicating in languages other than English, is at the heart of second language study, whether the communication takes place face-to-face, in writing, or across centuries through the reading of literature. Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use that language; in fact, students cannot truly master the language until they have mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. Learning languages provides connections to additional bodies of knowledge that are unavailable to monolingual English speakers. Through comparisons and contrasts with the language studied, students develop greater insight into their own language and culture and realize that multiple ways of viewing the world exist. Together, these elements enable the student of languages to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways.
>
> (South Carolina State Department of Education, 1993, p. 11)

Another theoretical framework examined was the Language Learning Continuum from the collaborative effort of the College Board, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and the New England Network (see Appendix). This framework is a performance-based model that lends itself quite well to our specific needs, because it represents a model of stages of progression in second language acquisition.

Proposed Strategy

The four objectives of the project were addressed as follows:

1. **To strengthen international course offerings by revising selected existing courses and creating a number of new ones:**

The authors decided to revise several existing courses that already incorporated international modules. The majority of the foundation courses at the School of Business have an international section, usually a chapter or unit of instruction as a minimum. This module was the target of our revision efforts to avoid overlaps (e.g., the international funds transfer section covered in both the Introduction to Economics and Introduction to Corporate Finance courses) and to make sure that certain topics were covered (e.g., ethics in a global economy).

The second element of this objective was the development of courses that were nonexistent or were inadequate in scope for our students' specific

needs. The authors decided to develop two courses similar in structure and objectives. One was targeted towards business students interested in global issues in Latin America and Spain. The second was targeted towards business students with an interest in France and the former French African colonies and Haiti. These choices were strictly related to *supply* (the availability of business professors from these geographic areas who were willing to participate in this process) and *demand* for these areas from business students.

The structure of the Entrepreneurial French and Entrepreneurial Spanish courses assumed that students had successfully passed both introductory level courses in the chosen language. The newly created language courses within the School of Business were taught using a combination of English and the target language. The structure of these courses emphasized the type of knowledge necessary for a businessperson to avoid serious blunders in the host cultures. Furthermore, it provided a historical, sociological, and psychological background to the understanding of culture and its implications in business and commerce. This emerging realization of a different culture and its resulting economic model provided the backdrop for understanding business relationships. The strongest contribution of these courses to students' education was the slow, yet effective process of moving from a U.S.-centric understanding of the world towards a new global understanding, where economic models and business relationships are perceived as results of very different processes. If the processes and input variables are different, why do U.S. students marvel at the difference in resulting outcomes?

Furthermore, the Entrepreneurial French and Entrepreneurial Spanish courses discussed the common threads that unite all these different groups of people, such as language and culture, and went further into exploring the various principal subsegments that compose the larger group. For example, after defining in general how Hispanics tend to be family-oriented because most subsegments share a cultural thread, the professor gave a couple of illustrations to show where marked differences occurred among subsegments.

Every lecture attempted to integrate an aspect of nonverbal communication within the context of business dealings. Among the questions addressed were the following:

- How far apart do people stand when they interact with one another?
- What hand gestures, if any are used, are acceptable?
- What do various items of clothing communicate?

- What are the accepted seating arrangements (business setting, informal setting, men and women)?
- Are there generally accepted religious principles that cannot be violated, such as acceptance or prohibition of certain foods, colors, icons, and particular forbidden behaviors?
- What are the political traditions with regard to commerce? For example, is barter part of the shared history? In the legal system, what is "justice," how is it carried out, and who decides?
- What additional traditions and symbols must be respected and acknowledged?

Of course, there are no clear answers to the above questions. They serve only to elicit or provoke thought and discussion in the classroom.

The framework for trying to understand nonverbal communication was to define whether the interaction occurred in . . .

- a partly business setting,
- a partly social setting,
- an all-business setting, or
- an all-social setting.

The following stage was to ascertain the "rules" for each kind of business interaction; for example:

1. What are the rules for gender interaction?
2. What are the rules for giving or accepting gifts?
3. What is the prevailing management style?
4. Which management style do your colleagues or customers prefer?
5. When and with whom is it appropriate to use an informal mode when speaking or writing?
6. What kind of humor is appropriate and in what situations?
7. Who determines who is in charge, and where does power reside?
8. How is age a factor in determining authority?
9. What economic factors influence authority?
10. Do favors count as a clearly defined substitute for money?
11. How is status determined?

The purpose of the previous exercises was to emphasize differences and to force students to challenge their preconceived notions of "what is," and to start thinking outside their comfort zones.

2. To strengthen library holdings in the international area:

The authors used a sizable portion of the grant funds to purchase a substantial cache of books and periodicals in the area of international business and cross-cultural management. These new materials were added to the existing ones in the university library. According to the latest findings of the Instructional Resources Team of the School of Business, our library holdings were more than adequate to satisfy the requirements set forth by our accrediting body, AACSB-International.

3. To train faculty on internationalization and integration of culture into curricula through forums and workshops:

Several forums were scheduled throughout the grant period. Experts in the development and implementation of modern foreign language curricula met with several School of Business faculty and shared course content, standards of language learning, theoretical frameworks, and experiences relating to best practices and pitfalls to avoid in this area. These experts were compensated with the funds procured from the Department of Education grant. The main purpose of these efforts was to educate our faculty in a different area (language, and primarily, cultural content delivery) in a very short period. Fortunately, the School of Business faculty represents a cross-section of the global population. We have colleagues from Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Haiti, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Peru, Taiwan, Tunisia, and other nations. This international faculty assimilated rather easily the new concepts presented by the experts and incorporated them successfully into their course offerings.

4. To expose students to international issues through a series of international forums and to enhance student and faculty awareness of the role of technology, especially the Internet, in global business:

Several forums were targeted towards our student population in the School of Business. It must be pointed out that a large proportion of our student body has not had the chance to travel internationally. Their exposure to people from other cultures comes firsthand from their interaction with our highly diverse faculty. The authors decided to supplement this exposure with a series of international forums open to all university students, but mainly targeted to the needs of our students in the School of Business. The topics of these international forums ranged from International Law to Export-Import Practices to Franchising Overseas.

Information Technology (IT) also occupied a very prominent place in the delivery of cultural knowledge. There was a lot of virtual interaction between students and foreign nationals of the same age through this medium. Some of this interaction represented asynchronous communication (e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, web sites, etc.), and other communication was in the synchronous mode, such as Internet-based videoconferences and chat rooms. After a couple of informal sessions in the computer lab, our students were capable of differentiating between the professor's accent and those of other native speakers whom they met on the Internet. In several instances, guessing the places of origin of the speakers based on their pronunciation became a challenging game for the students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of our assessment instruments on the effectiveness of our four-pronged strategy seemed to indicate a strong positive contribution in at least three areas. The grant made it possible to bring in outside consultants to train faculty who were serving as key personnel on strategies for internationalizing the business curriculum and crafting foreign business language courses. Such invaluable perspectives and experience allowed the key personnel to become better prepared to teach international business and foreign business languages.

Second, the grant made it possible for three new courses to be created and for four existing ones to be revised. After receiving critical training, the key personnel, with input from the external consultants, crafted three new courses that enhanced the teaching of international issues to our students, with the view of making them globally competitive. The new courses were Advanced International Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial French, and Entrepreneurial Spanish. The revised courses were Legal Environment of Business, Principles of Marketing, Corporate Finance, and Business Communication.

Third, 11 faculty members were able to travel to conferences where international or global issues were discussed, thus allowing them to enhance their knowledge of strategies for effectively teaching international business and foreign language courses. In addition, the project directors significantly enhanced their aptitude for teaching international courses by attending project directors' conferences sponsored by the Department of Education. Other faculty members also benefited through the sharing of this knowledge by the project directors.

Fourth, faculty members were exposed to speakers who addressed various issues in international business, such as cultural barriers to doing business abroad, thereby enhancing their knowledge and positioning them to be more effective teachers of international topics. The evaluations, which were completed by both professors and students generally showed agreement that the forums were enlightening.

Fifth, the grant made it possible for us to enhance library collections in international studies and foreign languages, thus providing professors with materials that allow for more effective teaching of international issues, and students with more study materials in international issues. The only area where the results of our efforts are mixed at best is in the area of library holdings. It is our contention that some results become more apparent with time than others. Perhaps the outcome of the strategy related to library purchases will become more noticeable later on, when students and professors develop research, course content, and monographs that employ such materials.

Overall, the general theme of the assessment results has been positive. Students appreciate our efforts to deliver an international-business-loaded curriculum. Professors enjoyed the challenge of developing courses from scratch in areas where only the business functions were within their realm of expertise (both theoretical and practical) and for which they had to build their levels of expertise in language acquisition, culture, and nonverbal communication, at least from a theoretical point of view.

The authors recommend the intensive use of IT tools in the course delivery process, since this generation of students has been properly labeled *Generation D* (for "digital"). Furthermore, it would be hard to argue against the reliance of Internet-based videoconference sessions as an inexpensive alternative to foreign travel. This consideration becomes very important when universities are facing shrinking budgets.

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Appendix

Language Learning Continuum

California State Department of Education
Foreign Language Framework

The following stages describe student performance along the Language Learning Continuum:

> **STAGE I** begins when the student starts to learn a second language. This may occur at any age. Stage I may encompass a four-to-five year sequence that begins in elementary or middle school, a one- to two-year high school program, or a one-to two-semester college or university program. . . .

STAGE II represents a progression in terms of vocabulary acquisition, fluency, aural and written comprehension, and sophistication of expression. The Stage II student may be in middle or high school at the traditional levels 1, 2, 3, or a college or university student in a second-semester course. . . .

STAGE III is a pivotal stage, as students move from the comfort of learned material to the challenging world of creating with the language. Students begin to adapt vocabulary to personal needs and to pursue their own interests in the language; in short, they become independent users of the language. The repertoire of vocabulary and grammatical structures increases, but as students attempt more original and complex tasks and communications, accuracy often decreases . . . . It is at Stage III that the relationship of classroom study to genuine language acquisition becomes problematic. Many students of Stage III (generally those in the third or fourth year of language study) can demonstrate their knowledge of the rules and structure of the language and read materials appropriate to their level of study, but are simply unable to put it all together when asked to speak and write. Many of these students subsequently are not encouraged to continue in the language, even though they were quite successful at Stages I and II. Because the time needed to successfully complete the outcomes specified for Stage III varies considerably among individual learners, successful completion of Stage III may require more than a traditional third-year high school course or a third or fourth semester of college or university study.

Within Stage III, learners have very different backgrounds and profiles. At the secondary level, many students have completed first-and second-year high school courses. At the college or university level, students enter Stage III by several routes, most commonly from beginning college or university courses or from three or four years of high school study. However, some students enter Stage III courses with other backgrounds, which may include:

- an extended sequence of language instruction that began in elementary or middle school,
- immersion or intensive programs in the United States and/or other countries, and
- a home background in the language being studied.

These students need adequate time to acquire and refine the skills and knowledge that will enable them to advance to the next stage.

STAGE IV Students at this stage demonstrate increasing mastery of Stage III performance outcomes. Stage IV students tend to be risk-takers, who are willing to make mistakes and to self-correct. These students explore topics that are less familiar, experiment with more complex structures associated with advanced functions, and engage in more elaborate and organized discourse. Students who achieve Stage IV outcomes are likely to have completed four to six years of middle or high school foreign language study or five to eight semesters of college or university study. Additionally, these students may have spent significant time in a country where the target language is spoken. . . .

STAGE V is a specialist stage that not all students will aspire to and that may be rare at the secondary level. However, with sufficient time, opportunity, and practice, non-native speakers should be fully capable of realizing Stage V outcomes. . . .

The Stage V student is likely to be highly motivated and interested in pursuing further education and/or career opportunities associated with a foreign language. Although some high school students with some immersion experience may reach Stage V, the majority of Stage V learners are at college or university level.

(California State Department of Education, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resource Division, [on-line PDF document, pp. 8-13])

Formative Foreign Language Program Evaluation: Dare to Find Out How Good You Really Are

7

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Below are some scenarios that may be encountered in similar form at many postsecondary institutions. One means of addressing the problems suggested in the scenarios is the use of a formative program evaluation:

Scenario 1: When she first enters the room, the instructor can feel the usual differences. It's the first class day for this 101 course, and she anticipates the usual: Many of the students will have had courses in the target language before, while the true 101 students, the actual beginners, will be lost. Many students from the latter group will later drop the class.

Scenario 2: Classes begin next week, and the new teaching assistants have gone through several days of orientation. The sessions have focused on the types of classes they will teach, departmental procedures, and the use of the textbook and its ancillary materials, including the language resource center. They have all received the set syllabus, with instructions to finish through Chapter 5 in the first semester and Chapter 10 in the second. Questions on expectations for student attainment and performance are deflected by reference to chapter contents.

Scenario 3: Disjuncture exists between the 102 courses and the 201 courses. Students and instructors alike are frustrated.

Scenario 4: Dissatisfaction over the language requirement has bubbled to the surface again. Students are complaining to their major departments, and department chairs are raising the issue with the dean. In the language department, discussions are being held yet again about getting new books.

Scenario 5: After teaching for 2 years at this institution, Mr. Dupont can almost tell where his freshmen came from, just by assessing their strengths and weaknesses in French. Through the learners he gets a picture of the language programs that send him students. This high school always sends him students with a really strong grammatical background; that other one graduates learners with a strong motivation and great knowledge of

Francophone cultures. At the end of the day this heterogeneity is a problem. All these students are so different; all these programs are so different. Why is it impossible to harmonize the objectives of his own curriculum with those from programs in local high schools or in local community colleges? Everybody, it would seem, would win from a more concerted approach.

Rare is the department of foreign language that has not dealt with such issues of curriculum development as placement, *false beginners,* instructional and curricular coordination, recruitment and retention, exiting students' satisfaction, and articulation with secondary and other postsecondary programs. While varied solutions to these individual issues exist, systematic program evaluation can provide the critical information upon which decisions to remedy these issues can be made.

Formative Program Evaluation

What Is It?

Foreign language (FL) practitioners regularly encounter problems and questions that may motivate them to evaluate the effectiveness of their language program. While earlier initiatives in program evaluation responded to the needs of large-scale curriculum developers, today's models, such as the present initiative, can easily be adapted to smaller institutions or districts. The legacy from these earlier, often large-scale initiatives and the lessons learned from their successes or failures allow us to briefly define program evaluation as follows: Program evaluations are (1) *systematic*: as measurements would establish unequivocal evidence of success or failure; (2) *scientific*: as between a program or method and its outcome, when definite cause-effect relationships are sought; (3) *context-embedded:* as each setting bears a distinct culture (Douglas, 1986); program evaluation is an endeavor that is in part social, and only in part, technical; (4) *formative* or *summative*: either formative studies guide curriculum revision efforts, or summative studies determine the merits of different FL teaching methods or curriculum choices.

The ideal circumstance for curriculum development would be to conduct a *needs analysis* (a type of formative evaluation; the differences reside in the timing for the initiative, as well as the size and scope of the evaluation) before program inception, followed by a *formative evaluation* while the program is being implemented, and then a *summative evaluation* at the end of the program (see Brown, 1995). Our choice to focus on formative evaluations can be explained by the fact that few faculty members witness

the birth of a new language program, and even fewer care to participate in a summative evaluation marking the demise of a program. A formative evaluation thus offers existing programs a means of investigating themselves to obtain information for program enhancement. As Patton (1990) puts it,

> Formative evaluation . . . is limited entirely to a focus on a specific context. Formative evaluation serves the purpose of improving a specific program, policy, group of staff (in personnel evaluation), or product. Formative evaluation aims at "forming" the thing being studied. Formative evaluators want to help improve human endeavors. There is no attempt in formative evaluation to generalize findings beyond the setting in which one is working. The purpose of the research is to improve effectiveness within that setting. (p. 156)

Through a formative program evaluation, a language department can generate both quantitative and qualitative data that can form the foundation for decision-making on central issues of curriculum development and thus more effectively address the kinds of issues raised in the introductory scenarios. The data collection techniques used in formative program evaluation should reflect not only the need for accurate (scientific) measurements, but also the necessity to describe and characterize the social (political) context by means of qualitative modes of data collection. A program evaluation of the type proposed here is called a decision-facilitation approach by Brown (1995), in that it provides information for departments to make decisions and changes on their own.

How Is It conducted?

Program evaluation can be likened to the Gaugin quote, "D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?" (Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?) Information needs to be gathered that represents program history (such as enrollment trends, class sizes, past curriculum development, etc.) in addition to the crucial information on the current status of the program's students, curriculum, instruction, and faculty. With such information in hand, departments can then make informed judgments on program direction.

Data can be collected on what are assumed to be concrete representations of the program contexts and outcomes. Examples of "things" that can be measured, observed, counted, and recorded about the department can include the following:

- **Student demographics**
  - A. academic level of students in FL classes
  - B. prior language learning experience(s) . . .
    1. in grades K-12
    2. at community/junior colleges
    3. abroad
  - C. gaps between FL courses (i.e., between high school and university study)

- **Student attitudes and motivations**
  - A. reasons for taking FL classes
  - B. attitudes towards foreign languages, other cultures, and so forth
  - C. expectations about the learning experience (ease/difficulty, length, ultimate attainment)
  - D. satisfaction with FL course work, including instruction, materials, and textbooks
  - E. contact and experience with language outside the FL course (pen pals, travel, relatives, friends, newspapers, television, films, etc.)

- **Learner abilities, knowledge, proficiencies** (both measured and self-perceived)
  - A. oral production
  - B. listening comprehension
  - C. reading comprehension
  - D. written production
  - E. knowledge of target culture(s)

- **Faculty satisfaction** with work conditions, program organization, curriculum and assessment, and administrative support

- **Perception of the program** both within other university units and outside the university (community, state).

The list is not exhaustive. It provides suggestions for potential evaluators. Each evaluator who has agreed to study a given program should reflect on the specific and unique context that is to be investigated. This reflection can be triggered by the habitual questions: Who wants the evaluation? Who are the protagonists? At what stage of the program's life is it happening? Why is it needed? What are the potential consequences for each group of protagonists? These questions need to be answered by the evaluators in order for them to decide which of the items on the previous list should be

included in the data collection design. One can easily see that the potential responses and different combinations of responses make each program evaluation a unique case.

Instruments and Processes

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection are useful in program evaluation. Survey questionnaires with close-ended responses (biodata, rankings, fixed choice responses, Likert scales, etc.) can be devised to gather information efficiently on student demographics, attitudes and motivations, and self-assessments. Open-ended questions in these questionnaires can generate important qualitative data that can provide new insight and understanding. Standardized and criterion-referenced tests can be used to determine student proficiencies and knowledge. The use of focus group interviews, a qualitative mode of investigation that takes advantage of group dynamics, allows the researcher to explore new issues and concepts.

Interpreting

Quantifiable data lend themselves first of all to clear charts of descriptive statistics that furnish basic information on the status and circumstances of a program. When appropriate, quantitative data can be further analyzed using inferential statistics to identify any significant differences within the program. Transcribed data from open-ended questionnaire items, interviews, and focus groups can help clarify and expand responses on tallied questionnaire items.

In our case a program evaluation initiative collected evidence in the different categories: (a) student demographic data, student motivation, student proficiency in the target language (listening comprehension, oral production, reading comprehension); (b) student self-assessment of target language proficiency, student satisfaction with teaching assistants (TAs), adjuncts, faculty, instruction, and with the program as a whole; and (c) perception of the program within other university units and outside the university (community, state). Analysis of qualitative data allowed the grouping of most common topics and made it possible to triangulate results obtained from the correlation of the variables previously listed.

Reporting

While the previous steps are probably among the most work-intensive ones evaluators have to take, the next phase is potentially one of the most

delicate. It is advisable to keep in mind three considerations: (1) Who is the primary audience? (State Department of Education? President of the university? Dean of the College of Humanities? Chair of the Department of Modern Languages? Potential applicants/recruits?); (2) What needs to be included in the report? (Do you need to include all the data? All the analyses?); and (3) Are several reports (versions) needed? When the evaluators have a clearer idea of how to answer these questions, they are ready to conceptualize the program evaluation report(s).

The purpose of a formative evaluation is not to make life-or-death decisions, but rather (a) to help institute changes in a program to better attain curricular objectives, (b) to review these objectives, if necessary (particularly useful if efforts are being made to realign a program with the new orientation proposed by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* [National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999]), and many times (c) to write curricular objectives, if none were proposed and stated before the evaluation.

With discussions of the purpose are also associated questions about the audience, the length, and the tone. Having a clear idea about who will have access to the report is indispensable in order for it to avoid appearing either too formal or too casual, as both can be perceived negatively by the stakeholders and may influence them in following, or not, the evaluators' recommendations. Other aspects of reporting may include considerations about the form of the report. While a written report is expected in most cases, the evaluation may, like a teaching portfolio, adopt other media and include diverse materials (videotapes, etc.).

Implications

Once the results of the program evaluation have been reported, the implications phase begins–the "Où allons-nous?"(Where are we going?) phase. Armed with the information from the program evaluation, the departmental faculty and administrators can make informed decisions about the curricular directions of the language program.

A Model Program Evaluation

Over the course of two academic years at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), a program evaluation was conducted using a decision-facilitation approach. This initiative can be characterized as a grassroots effort. It was not imposed upon the department by the administration (top-down model), but was prepared and designed by faculty members who

took it upon themselves to convince the chair of their department, the dean of their college, and the rest of the administration of the value of such an endeavor. The primary objective of the evaluation was to provide information, substantiate or reject intuitions, and assess program impact, quality, and effectiveness.

Subjects

The program evaluation was conducted within the curricular context of a four-semester language requirement for all students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts. The target population for the project included all students enrolled in second-semester French and Spanish courses (French/Spanish 102) and all students enrolled in fourth-semester French and Spanish courses (French/Spanish 202). Data collection occurred in the spring semesters over 2 consecutive years and involved 403 Spanish and 115 French students in Year 1, and 317 Spanish and 109 French students in year 2.

Instruments and Methods

Survey Questionnaires

In the 1st year of the project, a demographic and attitudinal questionnaire was distributed to all the target classes (see Appendix). The questionnaires were completed during class periods and returned to the researchers by course instructors. Students marked their responses to close-ended questions on machine-scannable response sheets and wrote responses to open-ended questions in spaces provided on the questionnaire. The 1st-year questionnaire required students to identify themselves, so that their responses could be correlated with results of proficiency measures discussed below. In the 2nd year of the project, all responses to a questionnaire were anonymous. The questionnaire for the intermediate students included modifications suggested by responses to the instrument for the elementary classes and information collected in focus group interviews.

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide a method for gathering rich data. The flexibility of the procedure allows researchers to discover and explore new topics, to study in a richer context and with greater depth issues that have already been identified, and to interpret data from multiple perspectives. A moderator guides the procedure, while a small group (usually 6 to 8 participants) discusses the topics that the interviewer proposes. We found it more comfortable to have two moderators present during the focus group interviews.

The first acts as the primary interviewer, while the second usually takes notes and reformulates when necessary what the participants have said.

Recruiting students to participate in focus groups is the first challenge. It was expected that, given our purpose, attracting participants would be a problem. We knew that we would have to rely on the least reliable sample: convenience or self-selected samples. We were ready to assess such bias. We dotted every n^{th} CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) test (administered as a measure of proficiency; see below) with a big red dot placed in the upper-right-hand corner. We informed students that those who had a red dot on their tests were invited to take part in a focus group discussion. We proposed incentives, necessarily nonmonetary ones because of ethical issues and our very limited budget. (Pizzas, soft drinks, cookies, and candy work very well with college students.) As it turned out, volunteers were more willing to help in one of the two languages surveyed than in the other.

Focus groups were asked to evaluate the question as to how structured the procedure needed to be. The less structured approach shows concerns for the views, experiences, and opinions of the participants. It is not necessarily less focused, but it is focused on broader issues. It necessitates the use of smaller groups and allows the moderator to be more passive. More exploratory in nature, it has a potential for creating inconsistencies when multiple focus groups are conducted for the same study, as was the case in this project. Necessity forced us to adopt a more structured approach. The emphasis allowed the discussion to remain on issues selected by the research team. When new issues emerged consistently across groups, we knew we had found a problem that was quite significant to students, such as discrepancies among teaching philosophies and practices among instructors in the same language program.

Questions are sequenced. The different categories include the following: warm-up/opening; introduction to the general topic of the conversation; transition toward the "true" topic of discussion (focusing); five key questions–true data-providers designed to collect participants' feelings, experiences, opinions, and so forth; ending question; summary question; and the final open-ended question (see Krueger, 1994).

The importance of focus groups cannot be underestimated. They provide an indispensable tool that allows the evaluators to improve survey questionnaires, obtain rich multiple perspectives on issues that are often simplified by a raw number in the survey data, and bring to the surface specific institutional circumstances. If faculty members know how to listen and analyze what students say, students will indicate in their own words and without being guided by the moderators, whether your program is homogeneous, whether it is satisfactory to its customers, and whether it is

heading in the right direction. One simply needs to invite the students, offer them food and beverages, make them speak, and find consistent patterns in what they have to say.

Language Proficiency Measures

In the 1st year, students in the target courses took two assessments of their language proficiency–a language-appropriate CLEP test to measure listening and reading comprehension, and the short form of a Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) to measure their spoken language proficiency. CLEP tests were scored by the College Board, which produces the tests. A sampling of SOPI tapes was scored by university faculty and graduate students who were certified raters of the SOPI in their respective languages. Because of the time-intensive nature of rating SOPI tapes and the cost if it had been done by the Center for Applied Linguistics, all tapes could not be rated. Proficiency measures were not administered in the 2nd year of the project, primarily because of the cost factor.

Results and Their Implications

Demographic Information

Responses from the questionnaires yielded information of immediate importance to the department, in that it confirmed suspicions and gave a sense of scope to critical issues of program effectiveness.

Placement: A problem faced by many language programs is that of false beginners, students enrolled in the first courses of a language sequence, although they have studied the language previously. The issue of false beginners is of importance to our department because no placement mechanism is currently in place.

Analysis of the questionnaires showed that fewer than one third of the students enrolled in the second-semester 102 courses had not studied the language before. Indeed, overall, 55% of the students had studied their language 2 or more years in high school, with an average 11.4% having studied 3 or more years (see *Scenario 1* above). That absolute beginners constitute the minority of students in courses incorporating the term "beginning" in their titles has significant ramifications for instruction and for the ultimate need to control access and provide alternatives for the false beginners. Retention concerns may also factor in, since the percentages of 2-year students increased in the fourth-semester 202 courses. One year in French 202, only 9% of the students had not studied the language in high school.

Possible solutions include the institution of required placement examinations, the review of high school records for prior language study, enhanced advising in other departments, and/or the creation of a hybrid/accelerated "103" course to address more effectively the needs of false beginners, while also addressing the needs of true beginners. Until such measures are instituted, instructors need to realize the makeup of their classes and the implications of this heterogeneity for each individual student.

Study Gaps: Related to the issue of false beginners was the discovery in the data that a large percentage (57%) of students with prior language study had gaps of 2 or more years before starting university language courses. Interestingly, about 80% of students in 202 courses classified themselves as juniors or seniors, even though university enrollment figures show that 67% of university students are juniors and seniors. In the College of Liberal Arts, where over 90% of those enrolled in the 202 courses are studying, the enrollment figure for juniors and seniors is only 60%.

The gap between high school and university language study may partially explain the preponderance of false beginners in language courses. While some students may consciously seek to "pad" their course loads with language courses at lower levels than their experiences suggest, others may fear that they are best served by taking a step or two backwards, rather than taking on the challenge of what may actually be more appropriate-level study. Added to the solutions concerning placement could be the need for greater and more cooperative articulation between high school, community/junior college, and university language programs (see *Scenario 5*), especially in light of potential study gaps created by high school block schedules.

Articulation: Data analysis demonstrates the great heterogeneity of our student population. To the causes listed above, one can add the fact that the influence of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* [National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999], as well as the state standards, has not yet reached every corner of the state. Different schools and districts have different teaching philosophies about language education, and few, we are finding, actually have a district curriculum framework for foreign languages.

While our department is moving towards a philosophy in harmony with the *Standards*, we found a common complaint by students in focus group discussions to be: "Yes, I have had Language A in high school and in Junior College; but USM does not teach it the same way. I really feel that I am a beginner in the language." In addition, demographic survey questionnaires show that the bulk of our student body is rather local, in that our

institution recruits heavily in its immediate geographical surroundings. These comments and facts emphasize the need for articulation (see *Scenario 5*) between our curricular objectives and the curricular objectives and philosophy of those institutions (secondary schools and 2-year colleges) that have traditionally sent students to our programs. It is hoped that, as a result of this initiative and the Standards movement, agreed-upon objectives for the first four levels of secondary and postsecondary language study can emerge in discussions between our university and its partners. These objectives can then be used to guide curriculum development, classroom practice, and testing procedures from the very first class in the target language in high school to the upper-level language seminar in college.

Attitudinal and Motivational Data

Reasons for Language Study: As might be expected, the vast majority (85%+ in 102 classes, 91%+ in 202 classes) of students enrolled in the classes investigated are there because of college-imposed four-semester language requirements (see *Scenario 4*). Many such learners cannot be characterized as having the most positive of attitudes towards their language courses, a situation that needs to be recognized in both curricular organization and the delivery of instruction. For example, in open-ended questionnaire items and in focus group discussions, the notion was repeatedly raised of different tracks of language study for those desiring to major or minor in the language, a suggestion that, while offering a potential curricular approach, also underscores student beliefs about the purposes of their language study. Also, a disturbing 30% responded "no" to the question as to whether they wished to communicate in their target language.

On a more positive note, students overwhelmingly expressed the desire to learn to communicate in their target language (70%) and to travel in areas where the language is used (over 50%). Almost a quarter of them stated that they had friends or relatives who spoke the language and with whom they desired to communicate. Interestingly, over 35% of the students were considering a minor in the language, which would require a total of 18 semester hours. As might be expected, given the increased perception of the utility of Spanish in future careers, more than half of the Spanish students considered the language important for their major, while only 30% of the French students held the same opinion.

In some instances, these motivational factors translated into significant differences in performance on proficiency measures, especially for the students in Spanish. The French results may have been affected by a smaller population. For example, significantly better CLEP scores were obtained

by Spanish students who were not fulfilling a requirement, who were planning to travel where the language is spoken, who were interested in communicating in the language, who had friends and relatives who spoke the language, or who were planning to major or minor in Spanish.

Satisfaction: In general, students seem relatively satisfied with their experiences as language learners at the university. Students marking neutral to positive responses (3 to 5 on a Likert scale) ranged from 85% (102) to 65% (202) in Language A and 94% (101) to 91% (202) for Language B. Closer analysis of these data, however, revealed some interesting dynamics.

While Language B had a 71% distinctly positive response rate (4 to 5 on a 5-point scale) in 102 courses, its positives dropped to 58% in 202 courses. Language A, on the other hand, achieved a 59% positive response rate in 102 courses, and its positives dropped to a disturbing 33% in 202 courses.

Comparison of responses to open-ended items in the questionnaires and responses from focus groups suggests that the "jump" from 102 to the 201-202 sequence is perceived as substantial and frustrating by many learners (see *Scenario 3*), particularly those in Language A. One implication may be the need to analyze curricular goals and enhance internal articulation between the elementary and intermediate courses. Students participating in the focus groups echoed the perceptions that program objectives were vague and not communicated to the learners.

A lack of clear curricular goals and of a curricular framework may also have inspired other student comments about instructional discrepancies both between and within levels of Language A courses. Taught by a greater percentage of teaching assistants and adjuncts than Language B, Language A courses might more immediately benefit from a curricular document that outlines objectives and expectations and that promotes a greater uniformity of approach (but which exists for neither language). Materials and textbook selections could then be based on the curricular framework, thereby facilitating internal articulation, instruction, and assessment. Teaching assistant and adjunct orientation and supervision (see *Scenario 2*) would also be strengthened through a substantive curriculum document.

Smoother articulation, well conceived and realistic goals and objectives, appropriate materials chosen to help address those goals and objectives, and coordinated instruction can contribute to improved learner satisfaction and perhaps performance in relation to realistic expectations. An important secondary benefit is that of addressing complaints about language requirements emanating from external sources (see *Scenario 4*). Accompanied by

advising informed by the data on previous study and gaps in study as well as placement and curricular options, the crystallization of the curriculum (with ongoing formative evaluation to allow for reformulation) presents a potent means of enhanced instruction and improved "external relations." Yet other benefits of implementing such suggestions can be increased retention of students and expanded recruitment into 3rd- and 4th-year courses.

Proficiency Data: Ultimate Attainment

One disappointing result from the use of the CLEP test is that students as a group by level did not attain recommended scores for the awarding of credit for their respective levels. These results may suggest that the program curricula are not successful at these levels. While a follow-up study is warranted to investigate these findings further, one problem faced in the process was student investment in the proficiency measures. Unlike learners taking the CLEP in order to obtain university credit, students in this project took the CLEP test as a non-credit-bearing part of their course work; and, indeed, a number informally expressed their lack of motivation in completing the task, a factor that may have contributed to lowered scores.

These suspicions of deliberately uncollaborative behavior for *some* of the students are warranted if one considers the mandated enrollment circumstance for this population. It emphasizes two needs to be considered by the evaluators. First, the "buy-in" effect is indispensable to guarantee the validity of the data. By "buy-in" (Birckbichler et al., 2000), we mean that the stakeholders and protagonists need to be convinced of the importance of the initiative. The "buy-in" effect was rather poor in the present initiative, not only with students, but also with some instructors teaching Language A–such observation leading to the legitimate question as to whether the students' lack of collaboration was induced by some instructors' lack of enthusiasm. Second, evaluation initiatives yield better results if they can be completely integrated into the existing curriculum and syllabi. Efforts had been made with course coordinators to keep open two and a half class meetings for the purpose of collecting CLEP, SOPI, and survey data. Some instructors prefaced these tests with negative remarks, stating that the test results would have no bearing on the course grades, and possibly dissuaded some students from trying their hardest (as reported in subsequent focus group discussions).

Other measures of proficiency are necessary and would have greater construct validity and certainly more of what Bachman and Palmer (1996) call "test appeal" (p. 42) for the learners, so as to encourage their investment in the process. These measures might also include proficiency

assessment mechanisms that are integrated into the fabric of each course, making program evaluation at the same time a cyclical and regular process in the life of the department.

"Buy-in" is a difficult but indispensable objective in program evaluation. When evaluators make every effort to inform and include every stakeholder, they are better able to create positive momentum for the collection of valuable data about the program being evaluated.

Conclusion

As seen in the opening scenarios, different problems often plague even the best language programs. Most of the problems in the scenarios afflicted our language programs. We proposed in this paper a systematic, context-embedded means to diagnose these problems and to suggest solutions: formative program evaluation. The objective of this paper was not only to propose a guide to potential future evaluators, but also to share the reflection that has guided our choices. Instruments to collect data are not valuable in and of themselves. They are valuable because they help the evaluating team obtain rich data that will make it possible to reach a better understanding of the program being surveyed. Only when these different perspectives and understandings are reached can the team make valid recommendations to improve the program they have evaluated. In our case, data and their interpretation clearly emphasized the importance of a coherent philosophy about language education, showing the necessity for consistent curricular objectives and frameworks and proving that placement testing and curricular reform are indispensable in addressing the largest statistical problem in our elementary language courses. Finally, they emphasize the importance of internal consistent articulation efforts and of necessary external articulation initiatives with institutions that send us the bulk of our population. "Where are we going?" Armed with rich data and a coherent report, we are now progressing on much improved ground.

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Appendix

Demographic Survey Questionnaire

Please circle your course level: FRENCH 102 or FRENCH 202

1. Please indicate the choice which best describes your currrent academic status:
   A. Full-time undergraduate student (at least 12 credit hours)
   B. Part-time undergraduate student (fewer than 9 credit hours)
   C. Full-time graduate student (at least 9 credit hours)
   D. Part-time graduate student (fewer than 9 credit hours)
   E. Continuing education student/auditor
   F. Other

2. Study of French in high school. Indicate highest course completed:
   A. None C. French 2 E. French 4
   B. French 1 D. French 3

3. Study of French in Junior/Community College. Indicate highest course completed:
   A. None
   B. French 101 or equivalent
   C. French 102 or equivalent
   D. French 201 or equivalent
   E. French 202 or equivalent

4. How much time passed from your last French class in K-12 or Junior/ Community College to your first French class at USM?
   A. Not applicable; never had French before
   B. A year or less
   C. More than 1 calendar year, fewer than 2
   D. 2 calendar years
   E. More than 2 calendar years, fewer than 3
   F. 3 calendar years or more

5. How many courses in this language have you had at any college or university (including this course and other French courses at USM)?
   A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4 or more

6. Your first French class at USM was:
   A. FR 101 B. FR 102 C. FR 201 D. FR 202

7. Once you enrolled at USM, how many semesters (not including summer sessions) did you wait to take your first French course at USM?
   A. 0 semesters; I did not wait.
   B. I waited 1 semester.
   C. I waited 2 semesters.
   D. I waited 3 semesters.
   E. I waited 4 semesters.
   F. I waited 5 semesters.
   G. I waited 6 semesters.
   H. I waited 7 semesters or more.

8. Were you advised to delay enrolling in your first French course?
   A. yes B. no

If yes, who advised you to delay?
(Questions 9 through 13: [A]: Yes; [B]: No)

9. Academic advisor
10. Professor in the department of your major
11. Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages
12. Parents
13. Friend(s)

14. At USM, have you . . . ?
    A. taken courses in sequence without a break (other than summer).
    B. had a break in your French studies of at least 1-2 semesters.
    C. had a break in your French studies of more than one year.
    D. had more then one break since you started French 101.

15. Current classification:
    A. Freshman C. Junior E. Graduate
    B. Sophomore D. Senior

Reasons for studying French at USM:
(Questions 16 through 24: [A]: Yes; [B]: No)

16. I need to fulfill a language requirement.
17. I plan to major in this language.
18. I will travel in areas where the language is used.
19. I wish to communicate in this language.
20. I was told this would be an easy language to learn.
21. I have friends/relatives who speak this language. I would like to communicate with them.
22. I might choose French as a minor.
23. I have experience in this language.
24. Knowledge of French is important for my career.

25. How much time have you spent in a country outside the U.S. where French is spoken?
    A. None D. More than 6 months, but less than 1 year
    B. Less than a month E. 1 year or more
    C. 1-6 months

26. How much time have you spent in an environment in the US (immersion, Francophone community, etc.) where French is used?
    A. None D. More than 6 months, but less than 1 year
    B. Less than a month E. 1 year or more
    C. 1-6 months

27. How far do you plan to continue with French?
    A. **For 102 students only:** I will not continue beyond 102.
    B. **For 102 students only:** I will not continue beyond 201.
    C. I will not continue beyond 201.
    D. I will not continue beyond 202.
    E. It depends on my schedule.

28. How satisfied are you with your experience as a learner of French at the University of Southern Mississippi? (Please, consider all the courses taken at USM; do not evaluate only this current course.) Rate your satisfaction A→E:
A = Extremely dissatisfied → E = Extremely satisfied.

A B C D E
– _____/_____ → +

29. How much contact do you have with French outside of class? Rate your amount of contact A→E:
A = little or no contact → E = frequent contact.
Interactively (friends/family/relatives who speak this language, pen pals, clubs, etc.)

A B C D E
– _____/_____ → +

30. How much contact do you have with French outside of class? Rate your amount of contact A → E:
A = little or no contact → E = frequent contact.
Receptively (cable TV, the Internet/WWW, reading newspapers, magazines, films, etc.)

A B C D E
– _____/_____ → +

31. How important is it for you to learn French?
A = not very important → E = extremely important.

A B C D E
– _____/_____ → +

Proficiency: Rate your proficiency in French
(A = low, little or no experience → E = high):

32. Reading:

A B C D E
– _____/_____ → +

33. Writing:

A B C D E

– _____/_____ → +

34. Listening:

A B C D E

– _____/_____ → +

35. Speaking:

A B C D E

– _____/_____ → +

36. Knowledge of Francophone cultures:

A B C D E

– _____/_____ → +

37. How many other languages have you studied?

A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4 or more E. None

Would you learn another foreign language at USM?
(Questions 38 through 48: [A]: Yes; [B]: No)

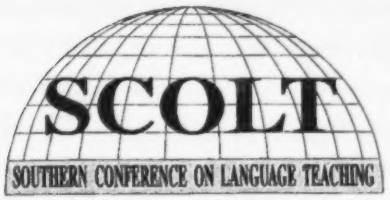
38. Spanish
39. German
40. Russian
41. Japanese
42. Italian
43. Chinese
44. Latin
45. Classical Greek
46. Portuguese
47. Swahili/Other African Languages
48. Arabic

Please indicate your major: _____

Please indicate your minor: _____

Please indicate in the space below any additional comment or concern that was not addressed by the questionnaire. (Continue on the back, if necessary.)

Thanks for your assistance in helping us improve foreign language instruction at USM.



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